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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE

CHRISTIAN GUIDE

TO A RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES,

DESIGNED AS A

SELECT COMMENTARY

ON THE

FOUR EVANGELISTS,

HARMONIZED AND CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

IN A NEW TRANSLATION, ON THE BASIS OF

WAKEFIELD'S VERSION:

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

AND A COPIOUS

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY JOHN SAMUEL THOMPSON,
MINISTER OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY, UTICA, N. Y.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ARE ABLE TO MAKE THEE WISE UNTO SALVATION, THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.——PAUL.

UTICA, N. Y.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY A. G. DAUBY.

1826.

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NORTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW-YORK—*TO WIT:*

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the fifth day of January, in the fiftieth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and twenty six, JOHN S. THOMPSON, of said District, hath deposited in this office, the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"The Christian Guide to a right understanding of the sacred Scriptures; Designed as a Select Commentary on the four Evangelists, harmonized and chronologically arranged in a new translation on the basis of Wakefield's Version: to which are prefixed a brief memoir of the Author, and a copious introduction to the New Testament. By JOHN SAMUEL THOMPSON, Minister of the first Universalist society, Utica, N. Y. The Holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus.—*Paul.*

In conformity to the act of Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned," and also to an act entitled, "An Act, supplementary to an act, entitled, 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of Designing, Engraving, and Etching historical and other prints."

RICH'D R. LANSING,
Clerk of the Northern District of New-York.

TO THE MEMORY OF THE

REV. JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L. L. D. F. R. S.

The most Philosophical Advocate of Pure Christianity, and the Most Successful Opposer of its Corruptions;

OF THE

REV. GILBERT WAKEFIELD, A. B.

The most Critical Translator of the Christian Scriptures;

OF THE

REV. NATHANIEL LARDNER, D. D.

Who, in his "Credibility" and "Jewish and Heathen Testimonies" Has erected an everlasting and impregnable bulwark For the safety of the Christian Religion;

AND OF THE

REV. THEO. LINSEY, & REV. THOMAS BELSHAM,

Successively Ministers of Essex-st. Chapel, London; the brightest Examples of Disinterested Devotion to the Cause of Pure and Undefiled Religion, and the most Fearless and Candid Confessors of Truth, when most Despised and Unpopular:

ALSO TO THE

REV. ABNER KNEELAND, OF NEW-YORK, AND

REV. HOSEA BALLOU, OF BOSTON;

For their indefatigable labours to reclaim Mankind to the Knowledge of the true God, as a Universal and Unchangeable Father;

AND ALSO, WITH GREAT CORDIALITY, TO

ALL THE MINISTERS OF RECONCILIATION,

In fellowship with the Universalist Convention of the State of N. York;

THIS WORK,

Designed to promote the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent,

Is most Respectfully Dedicated,

By their Sincere fellow laborer

In the Gospel of Christ,

JOHN S. THOMPSON.

PREFACE.

No apology can reasonably be expected for any judicious attempt to illustrate the sacred volume, the fountainof life, and charter of the christian's privileges. Every effort of human ingenuity, every advance in critical refinement, every new discovery relative to the history of the times in which the sacred writers lived, and every detection of inconsistency, in former translations and commentaries, open the way to new improvements, and facilitate the acquirement of more correct and rational views of the religion of Jesus, and the emancipation of human intellect from spiritual thraldom, and the bondage of ignorance.

An apology, however, can be fairly preferred, sufficient to justify this undertaking. When men had fallen from the instructions derived from the Creator, through the traditions of the aborigines of this world, and the light of nature, diffused in the phenomena of Creation and Providence, Heaven interposed by giving a new revelation. When the spirit and influence of that dispensation began to decline, God sent forth his own Son, to reillumine the world by a still more glorious light in the Gospel: and after the brilliancy of that most perfect luminary, became obscured by the corruptions of the Romish Church and the introduction of Pagan notions, it pleased the Father of lights to raise up men of bold and adventurous minds, who succeeded, in different degrees, to check the inroads of idolatry and superstition, and rouse the slumbering mind to inquire what Christianity was, and ought to be. So of late it hath pleased the same bountiful donor of every good and perfect gift, to manifest to some of his intelligent offspring, more especially in this free and inquiring country, the grand deception that has darkened for many ages the brightest part of that revelation, bestowed on mankind through Jesus Christ our Lord. So supereminent is the information of eternal things to the soul of man, to all other instructions, whether political or moral, that the light which the Gospel casts over the gloomy scenes of futurity, is described as the sole object of Christ's Mission, which brought, to a dying world, the glad news of immortality and eternal life. But alas, what advantage is there in life,

if it be exposed to the danger of interminable misery. This! this is the grand subject of the serious mind. Having learned that man shall live always, the next most important inquiry is, shall he live happily? The consoling reply, he shall be happy while immortality endures, is that which this work is intended to demonstrate. If this grand desideratum can be effected, I shall rejoice in having been the happy instrument, in the hand of God, of having done fourfold as much for mankind, as all the professed commentators of the last fifteen centuries.

The primary lesson, taught by our ever blessed Master, was the knowledge of God as a Universal Father. This is implied in that unparalleled form of prayer* which he delivered to his disciples, and, through them, to the whole world; for no scripture, saith an apostle, is of private interpretation.† Through the whole New Testament, the sacred writers seem to dwell on this endearing appellation. I ascend, saith the Saviour,‡ to my Father and your Father: and lest any should apply this language, by way of restriction, to any particular class of men, exclusively, Paul, before a heathen audience, says of the whole, inclusively "we are also his offspring."‖

On the destruction of the Roman Empire, after the death of Constantine, and the introduction of Gothic ignorance, barbarism, like a resistless monster, made equal usurpation in Church and State.§ The religion of Jesus had now become nearly as corrupt as the policy of Rome and the sun of righteousness,¶ which had arisen in the Gospel day, had either undergone a total eclipse, or as if disgusted with the profanity of mankind, withdrawn to illumine another hemisphere; and left the professing christians, either to the shades of night, or the glimmering of those tapers they had impiously preferred. Seeing, therefore, the true character of the Universal Parent, either almost lost, or at least continually misrepresented, in the different commentaries extant among christians, after the example of my divine Master, I have endeavoured to recal mankind to this primary and most essential article of our holy religion. Jehovah being the father of all his intelligent offspring, their inheritance can never be forfeited, nor their relationship disannulled.

I would not reflect on my predecessors, who have amply contributed to the illustration of the history, criticism, and other particulars of the sacred Scriptures; but truly, the great doctrines of Revelation, as yet, lie concealed beneath a load of rubbish in all the commentaries on the holy book in circulation, if we except a very few in which the Divine Unity has been maintained and defended.** The great body of commentators, have followed each

*Luke 11. 1—6. †2d Peter 1. 20. ‡John 20. 17. ‖Acts 17. 29. §See Mosheim, Jortin, and others on that period. ¶Mal. 3. 2. **Those of Priestley, Locke, Pierce and Belsham.

other in close succession, pursuing the old path of misrepresentation, apparently with hearts alienated from the truths of the Gospel, by reason of the darkness that is in them because of unbelief.* Peter tells us, Moses put a yoke on the neck of the Israelites which they were unable to bear;† but modern commentators and preachers say to mankind, Moses chastised the Israelites with whips, but Christ will chastise you with scorpions.‡ No wonder then that men act towards Christ as the Israelites did to Rehoboam. Continually do we hear it proclaimed, that most men will sink deeper into perdition on account of Christ's interposition on their behalf. May God forgive such preachers and commentators; they know not what they do!

When I first contemplated this laborious undertaking, I thought of writing notes, comments, or dissertations on those passages only, which I believed had been misunderstood by former annotators; but the more I reflected on the subject, the more I perceived the plan which I have adopted to be useful, and necessary to the accomplishment of my design. To proceed from one Evangelist to another, seemed to be trifling with the time and good sense of the intelligent reader, and filling a book with useless repetitions. To arrange, therefore, the Gospel History, written by the four Evangelists, chronologically, into one digested series, appeared not only adapted to the advantage of the reader, but particularly calculated to facilitate the work of a commentator. But while I thought of these things, a war arose in my mind about the management of the sacred text. Should I write notes on the Gospels, harmonically arranged merely, by figures of reference. The common reader would be entirely at a loss, in perceiving the intention and application of the comment to the text. The next inquiry which suggested itself, was, if the text be admitted, from what version shall it be taken? Not finding myself at liberty to use any book; the copyright of which has been secured, I immediately fixed on Wakefield's Version, as possessing advantages in many things over all others: and the more I reflect, the more I am satisfied with the selection. Having thus far proceeded in my plan, I found another difficulty to present itself of somewhat an appalling nature. The discrepancies of harmonists, appeared truly perplexing. A Newcombe, a Priestley, an Eichhorn, a Michaelis, and a White, seemed alternately to prefer their pleas, and call my attention to the different merits of their claims. Notwithstanding, I adopted the arrangement of Dr Priestley, which is followed, not blindly, but with such variations as were thought consistent and necessary.

As it is the design of the author, that this work, in connexion with his lectures, should furnish the student and intelligent inquirer, with a complete synopsis of the christian theology; and a

*Eph. 4. 18. †Acts 15. 10. ‡1st. Kings. 12 14.

concise directory to point out the path of investigation, in all subjects connected with our holy religion, a copious introduction to the study of the New Testament, has been prefixed. This part of the work will consist of brief dissertations, on the following important and interesting subjects: 1 Of the Scriptures in General, 2 The Authenticity, 3 The Authority, 4 The Integrity, 5 The Inspiration of the Writers, 6 The Language, 7 The Chronology, 8 The History, 9 The Interpretation of the Scriptures, 10 Jewish Customs, 11 Jewish Sects, 12 The Christian Church. Then will succeed, a Commentary on the Harmony of the Evangelists, with which the volume will close.

To the christian reader, the author begs leave to observe; that it is not without intense concern that he has ventured to commence this work. His introduction to the fellowship of Biblical commentators, fills him with all the solemnity of an approach to the world of spirits. His ardent prayer to Almighty God is, that in all his attempts to explain the sacred volume, he may be continually under the influence of that Spirit, which descended on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost; and be kept by the goodness and wisdom of his Heavenly Father, from falling into any misrepresentation of the Heavenly Oracle. He enters on the work, at peace with God and all his intellectual offspring; and like the great Master of Christians, desires to labor for the profit and salvation of the whole world. May he and all his readers be divested of all prejudice and uncharitable selfishness, and duly feel the spirit of the following lines:

Fond mortals do themselves beguile,
When on themselves they rest;
Blind is their wisdom, vain their toil,
By thee, O Lord, unblest——*Scott.*

If I am right, thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, O teach my heart
To find that better way.——*Pope.*

Utica, January 5, 1826. J. S. T.

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Though a certain delicacy be connected with the writing of a person's own history, which renders the labor somewhat unpleasant and embarrassing, and naturally restrains that freedom of praise or blame, which posterity might feel disposed to attach to the different facts contained in the narrative, yet the greater certainty and simplicity of the history will amply compensate for this deficiency. Indeed, all the intelligent reader requires, and all that the honest historian should relate, is a candid and simple statement of facts, with their causes and consequences, the motives and designs of the transaction, in order to form such conclusions as may appear most correct and natural.

I was born in August, 1787, in the town of Ballywilliam, parish of McCosquin, within the liberties of Colerain, county of Londonderry, Ireland. I was the only son of David by Mary; the former of whom died in February, 1813, aged 59 years; leaving a family of eight persons to lament the loss of one, who had spent a laborious and industrious life in their service; and whose character remained doubly endeared from the consideration that it had never been sullied by a single stain. Happy shade, thou dwellest now as thou always didst, remote from fell envy's dread domain; and though the bubble honors of life's short fame, never drew upon thee the hate or praise of vulgar minds, in solitude with thy family, in unmasked friendship with a select few, and in communion with the Great Author of being, thy days passed in innocence and thy sun went down in tranquillity.

Of my ancestry no record was kept, nor did the obscure life of country farmers, seem worthy of a place in the public registers. To be, satisfied their desire: John, my grandfather, was an elder in the presbyterian congregation of the parish; and was highly esteemed by the little circle of his acquaintances. My mother's family, of the name of Simon, were all warmly attached to the *Secession* from the Church of Scotland: her brother, Thomas, was also an elder of a congregation; and his revered name and unva-

ried piety, are still held in grateful remembrance. Thus the memory of my ancestors is embalmed, not in the archives of royalty, political fame, or martial achievement, but in the remembrance of those who witnessed their exemplary piety, honest industry and moral virtue. Connected with my family are the Kings, Mcphersons, and Rosses, all of whom are highly and justly esteemed, being uniformly well conducted, sober, and religious; and all remain strenuous sticklers for the doctrine and discipline of the Swiss reformer.

Though the fifth child, yet I was the only son of my mother, whose parental fondness tended greatly to retard my early education, so that when I entered the twelfth year of my age I remained ignorant of the Roman alphabet! About this time, she and I began, simultaneously, to perceive our mistake, and mutual exertion soon repaired the deficiency. I had only gone six weeks to school, till, using the language of Gil Blas, I could read, *couramment*, currently, and as ninety-nine out of an hundred of mankind, think all read alike well, who read with equal celerity, no further delay on this point was deemed necessary. I was immediately set to *pot-sticks*, a name of ridicule given to straight lines, first made by beginners in writing. Having used the pen, with assiduity, for about three months, I was transplanted from the desk of the scribe, to that of the arithmetician. Six months being added to the former period, I began to approach the summit of my master's temple of science, and my English education was therefore deemed complete. Here a pernicious stagnation commenced, and remained until the seventeenth year of my age.

During this season of relaxation, the mind, ever active, sought for employment. Continually pondering on religious subjects, I became very intimately acquainted with the Bible: a considerable part of which I committed to memory. A peculiar desire for doctrinal discussions and frequent references to the scriptures, enabled me to use their language with great ease and facility. Being frequently in religious meetings, and accustomed to pray in public, from the age of fifteen, I surmounted that diffidence and embarrassment, too common among young people on devotional occasions.

In the spring of 1802, I offered as a candidate for christian fellowship with the Seceder congregation of Crossgar; and as candidates for communion were examined three several times before admission, my mind was greatly agitated through fears of unworthiness. Never shall the remembrance of that awful season, when first I approached the table of the Lord, be erased from my mind. I had been taught, and consequently believed, that, by nature, I was exposed to all the anger and vengeance of an insulted Deity; and therefore, I thought, if I should escape from the devoted altar, without becoming a victim to my temerity, I should esteem it an unparallelled instance of divine forbearance. Indeed, such were

the dreadful apprehensions, on that occasion, that I thought as soon as I would stretch out my hand to receive the emblems of a crucified Redeemer, the lightnings of heaven would play on my devoted head!

Such feelings arose from the belief of *two* doctrines, abundantly absurd and popish; the first, that none are qualified to commemorate the death of Christ, but such as have obtained entire preparation for Heaven, and the second, being a cognate of transubstantiation, generally called consubstantiation, implies, that though the bread and wine in the sacrament, be not really transformed into the very flesh and blood of Christ, yet he is really and essentially present in these emblems, and that the believer as actually feeds on Christ's flesh and blood, in the communion, by faith, as on the bread and wine, by sentient faculties. Far otherwise, is the subject represented in the sacred Scriptures. There we learn, that on the night previous to his crucifixion, he took bread and brake it, and gave to his disciples, saying: "*take, eat, this is (the memorial of) my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me.*" Hence the disciples usually broke bread, every first day of the week, in memory of their crucified Master.* Thus, the celebration of the Lord's supper is, and was intended to be, a grateful memorial of what he has done for us, and a pledge of our attachment to his religion.

The manner of administration of this institution, among the Seceders and churches of Scotland, in general, is calculated to make a deep impression on all spectators, but more especially on the minds of timid youth. The season of celebration is generally announced, four weeks before the communion Sabbath; a fast is held on the Wednesday or Thursday preceding the day of administration, and a public service, on the Saturday, at the close of which, little square pieces of lead called tokens of admission, with the name of the church or congregation engraven on them, are distributed to all communicants, which are collected by the elders of the congregation, from the persons who present themselves at the table. On the Sabbath, the minister, attended by two or three of the neighboring clergy, ascends the pulpit, and after the morning services, the congregation all remaining, which, on those occasions, is unusually large. The minister commences an address on the nature and design of the institution. Afterwards, he proceeds to *fence the table*, a peculiarity of expression, which implies a public and solemn prohibition of all who are guilty of any sin, of all heretics, who hold not, in sacred conscience, the holy orthodox, Apostolic, and Calvinistic faith. In a word, the Minister's address is a complete imitation of Moses' conduct,† when he divided the Israelites into two classes; the one being placed on Mount Ebal, to pronounce a thousand curses upon the people, and

*Acts 2. 42; and 20. 7 †Deut. 27.

the other, on Mount Gerizim, to pronounce as many blessings. The relation of this part of the history, naturally reminds me of a story, concerning a certain curate, in Wales, who, on the Sabbath of *commination*, alias *cursing*, thus addressed his congregation:—"My hearers, the day is very cold, and your patience is almost exhausted. I am, however, on this day, appointed by the canons of our church, to read a part of the service, which imprecates a thousand curses upon you all. I will, therefore, cut the work short, in righteousness, by saying, 'the curse of God rest upon you all!" and thus dismissed the congregation.

However these proceedings may be regarded by others, they made a most deep and lasting impression on my mind. I hence, became peculiarly frequent and fervent in prayer; and, in the course of that season, believed that I received the impression of regenerating power; a doctrine, probably, too much despised and neglected, from the great and frequent abuses to which it is liable, but which, notwithstanding, makes a very prominent and essential part of the christian dispensation.

Shortly after these events, I became ardently desirous of engaging in the ministerial office, believing myself, thereunto, divinely called. And though I saw no probability of ever attaining the desired object of my calling, yet, like Abraham "*against hope believing in hope*," I doubted not, but was strong in faith, trusting in the Sovereign Dispenser of all events. Here I solemnly aver, that whatever motives may have operated with others, in the choice of the holy Ministry, I never desired it on any other account, but as the means of serving the Redeemer's kingdom, in the most effectual manner, by promoting the spiritual and eternal interests of his subjects. Nor have I, in all my life, from the time the impression was first made, for a moment doubted of my appointment to that office, being as really determined, in the purposes of Jehovah, as the selection of Jeremiah to that of a Prophet.

Perceiving my circumstances extremely unfavorable to the accomplishment of my views, and having no other ground of confidence but the hope of a special interposition of Providence, I made a solemn vow, that if God would give me the desire of my heart, by putting me into the ministry of his dear Son, no worldly considerations should ever operate to enslave my mind, or embarrass my services; my heart should be free, my mind uncontrolled, my life and labors devoted to the propagation of his Gospel, without any restraint arising from fear or hope, persecution or reward. This, my solemn promise, I committed to writing, enclosed it in wrappers, affixed several seals, and kept it in secrecy until I became capable of translating it into Latin. And at whatever time I felt convicted of having yielded to any folly of youth, or suffered my mind to wander from God and his service, I retired and wept over my covenant engagement.

In the Spring of 1804, I consulted Mr. Wilson, the minister of

the congregation with which I was connected, relative to the means which I should adopt, in order to obtain the end in contemplation. He informed me there was no way of approaching the sacred office, lawfully, but by the door of Presbyterial ordination, to which I could not attain otherwise, than by a servitude of ten years; three at a classical school, three at a University, and four at a "*Divinity Hall*" This information caused my heart to sicken at a prospect so truly appalling. God of wisdom, cried I, when will the time come, in which this arbitrary and unnecessary yoke of bondage, shall be broken from the neck of candidates for the ministry; and they admitted, whenever they are found qualified, though they may not have been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel nor gone through the barbarous process of collecting the relics of Pagan Rome, for four or five years, to obtain suitable preparation for the service of Christ in the Gospel. This I say, from a conviction that the study of the Latin classics is by no means necessary to a clergyman; and that both Roman and Grecian Mythology is generally found to prove injurious. Notwithstanding, I resolved to undertake the long and laborious exercise of plodding through the Latin Dictionary; and also the tedious and ridiculous process of making Latin both in prose and verse; the very best specimen of which, would have excited Horace to exclaim:

———— Operum hoc, mihi crede, tuorum est.

Believe me, Sir, you always miss
The accent, rhyme, and tone;
No Roman will acknowledge this,
The work is all your own.

I would not be understood as disapproving the excellent instructions given at many academical and collegiate establishments for education; but I am persuaded, it is equally absurd for men to require an apprenticeship of seven years for the ministry, as for any other business. There are some who will make greater progress in three years, than others in seven, and it must be very inconsistent, to compel those who can run swiftly, to loiter with those who may be indifferent as to the time spent on the journey. I am well satisfied, that without a considerable knowledge of history, political, natural, and ecclesiastical, (which implies an acquaintance with the elements of Mathematics, Geography, and Astronomy,) also of Grammar and composition, and the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, no man can ever rationally pretend to be above a mere novice in Theology; and instead of being an advantage to the christian ministry, he will only disgrace both himself and it: but proper application, under a good tutor, may accomplish all this in three or four years, provided the student possess good talents and a liberal English education; and have, moreover, arrived at the age of sixteen, earlier than which period, no person should attempt a course of collegiate studies.

As soon as my friends knew my intention, they strenuously opposed my project; and believing it impossible for me to proceed, either with or without the assistance which my father could afford, they advised him to not countenance me at all. I was therefore, deprived of all support, and left entirely to my own exertions. At this peculiar season of trial, one of my relatives, Edward Taylor, sent for me, and began to expostulate, concerning the imprudence of my undertaking; and offered me considerable inducement to abandon my design and content myself with the occupations of my father. Having listened a few moments to his adulations, I instantly assumed an air of determination, which soon confronted all his arguments, and filled him and all my friends with despair of success, in their endeavors to divert my attention from my favorite pursuit. "Sir," said I, "unless the eternal Jehovah have fixed by an immutable decree, that I cannot, I shall be a minister!"

On my way to school, the next day, my mind was greatly agitated on account of the advice of my father, not to return to his house till I had changed my resolution. But raising my heart and voice to the God of nature, I exclaimed, the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; and if it seem good to him that I should serve him in the ministry and kingdom of his dear Son, he can as easily furnish me with the means, as he did Abraham with the ram for an offering. Whilst I uttered these words, that passage of the thirty-seventh Psalm was divinely impressed on my mind: "Delight thyself in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass; he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon day." So powerful was the impression that these words made, that I leaped for joy as I passed on my way, and never after did I doubt of success, though nearly the whole expense of my education, was derived from teaching whilst I was taught.

I have written these things for the encouragement of youth in indigent circumstances. None can have greater obstacles to surmount, than those, over which, by the help of God, I have triumphed. Let therefore none be discouraged, for "prayers and pains will effect any thing." But let us reflect on the prayer of Agur; 'give us neither poverty nor riches:' and on that which our blessed Master has taught us, "thy will be done." Blessed be the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, that ever he counted me worthy, by putting me into the ministry of reconciliation. O, that I may like Caleb follow him fully!

Unwilling to occupy much of the reader's attention or time, with the private concerns of an individual, I shall study to render this narrative as concise as possible. In 1805, I left Colerain, and went to reside with my father, who had removed into the county of Antrim, four miles south-east of Ballymoney. Here

the Rev. Moses Kerr, minister of the Seceder congregation of Drumafivey, became my tutor, and exerted himself on my behalf; so that in 1808, on being examined by a committee of the Presbytery of Derry, I obtained the following certificate:

"I hereby certify that I am intimately acquainted with the bearer, John S. Thompson, a young man of good talents and close application. I have examined him in the presence of the Rev. Messrs. Bell, Jardin, and Kineer, who agree with me in opinion, that he has read Greek and Latin to their satisfaction, in order to go to College."

Drumafivey, October, 1808. MOSES KERR.

Notwithstanding, as I found my progress peculiarly embarrassed by pecuniary difficulties, I declined making the intended journey to Scotland; and at the instance of some friends, commenced a school in the vicinity of Ballycastle, a beautiful village and port at Fair Head, opposite the Island of Rathlin. Here I cannot forbear mentioning the names of Mr. Andrew Boyd and Mr. John Sharpe, two excellent young men, with whom I maintained a most intimate and confidential friendship. The house of Mrs. Boyd was truly to me a delightful home, where I received every mark of good will and kind hospitality. Here let me be permitted to say, that Ireland is the only country on earth, where hospitality is developed in all the magnitude of its *soothing* influence, and heart felt engaging attractions.

During the winter, I delivered evening lectures on English Grammar to a large class of young gentlemen, who were all well pleased with the new method of instruction. This course of lectures established my reputation, as a Grammarian, and obtained for me that respectability in my profession as a teacher, that through all the vicisitudes of time, place and station, I have ever been able to maintain. At this time, Drs. Boyd and Fullerton commenced their classical studies under my care, and Dr. Christie completed his course, in the above department.

In the Fall of 1809, I returned to Colerain and resumed my own studies, under the direction of Mr. Guiler, one of the best and most philosophical teachers I ever knew. As the Academy was very numerously attended, I read with all the Latin and Greek classes, and in the evening, recited privately, a portion of Homer's Iliad, on which he commented with great ability.

In November, I embarked for Scotland, and entered the first Philosophical class in the University of Glasgow, the chair of which was then filled by the worthy professor Jardin. This was the usual rank of students in the second year; but as my examination in the Latin and Greek was satisfactory, I was permitted to enter as student of Logic and Mathematics. Notwithstanding, I also attended the Greek classes, public and private; then con-

ducted by Professor Young, undoubtedly the most critical Grecian of the age, if we except the great Porson of Cambridge, England; to whom, as a public lecturer, the Scotch Professor, could not be justly deemed inferior. Nor have the other chairs of this excellent institution been dishonored. The name of Reed in Logic, Hutchinson in Ethics, Simpson in Mathematics, Burns in Surgery, and Thompson in Chemistry, are sufficient to elevate its character to the first rank of Collegiate establishments. Though I afterwards became acquainted with the merits of the different Universities in Europe and America, I have seen no reason to prefer any other University to that of Glasgow. Nay rather, it is my solemn impression, that an attentive student will progress farther in the science here, in four years, than he can any where else in six. The number of students at this College, equals, annually, about 1500; all of whom are intended for the Ministerial or Medical profession. The mode, adopted here, of delivering morning lectures, and afterwerds examining the students at a later hour on the same day, on the subject of the morning's lecture, has a most excellent tendency; and so effectually engraves the leading doctrines of the science on the tablet of memory as proves a powerful antidote to forgetfulness. The Philosophical and Chemical apparatus is good, the College library large, and well selected; and Hunter's Museum, (so called from the celebrated donor, Dr. Wiiliam Hunter, of London) is a great advantage and ornament to the University. Here I first began to discover, in what department of literature my mind was calculated to excel. Out of 170 students in the Logic class, of all ages and from several countries of Europe and America, I had only two that merited the name of rivals; and in Mathematics, I had none at all, and therefore obtained of my fellow-students, the cognomen of Euclid.

In 1811, I went to the University of St. Andrews, partly with a view of variety, and partly encouraged by the prospect of being able to defray my expenses, by teaching in one of the schools in that city. During my residence there, I occupied a room in St. Leonard's College and attended the lectures of Professor Cooke, on Moral Philosophy, Dr. Briggs, on Chemistry, and a course of lectures on Civil History. Cooke was a great admirer of Puffendorf, and was generally so surnamed by the students. He labored, strenuously, to maintain the doctrine of free agency, which tended to excite, in my mind, suspicions of Calvinism. The dignity of the Latin chair was well sustained by Dr. John Hunter, who was in all things at St. Andrews, what Professor Young was at Glasgow. The Theological chair of St. Mary's College, was then truly dignified by the worthy Professor Hill, at that time, the best Orator and ablest Theologian in Scotland. The library at St. Andrews is the largest in that kingdom. The extensive Halls of the ancient Parliament House, are completely filled with books, and students are under no restrictions nor taxation in their

admission. At this time, I joined the Philosophical Society of St. Andrews, and supported, in my first thesis, the materiality of the human soul, a doctrine then esteemed closely allied to Atheism, but had no effect on my character, being then considered one of the most pious students.

In 1812, I returned to Ireland, and commenced as a classical teacher, in the Academy of Newton Limavady, a most delightful village on Lough Foyle, fifteen miles north of Derry. Here, seemingly, more by accident than otherwise, I became acquainted with the Methodists: and by reading the works of Whitby and Fletcher, I exchanged my Calvinistic side of the five points, for that of the Arminian. Not finding my situation so profitable as I expected, I removed to a private school, beautifully situated on the banks of the Foyle, eight miles south of Derry, where I spent a season, most agreeably, amongst an effectionate people. Shortly after I had opened my school, being ardently concerned for the spiritual welfare of the people, who seemed to me very indifferent about religion, I commenced to preach on the Sabbaths in the school room; which soon roused the attention of the neighborhood, and had a very happy tendency. Many of the people were manifestly blessed, and their christian privileges greatly improved. The Episcopal Clergyman of the parish came to hear in common with the people of his charge, and highly approved, which induced many of the neighbors to desire the erection of a Meeting House, in that place, for my use, which might serve as a chapel of ease. My unwillingness to locate in a country place, at so early a period of my life, prevented the execution of the design.

Whether I was now become a wild enthusiast, or a very zealous Christian, afforded a topic of frequent discussion, and the votes were numerous on both sides of the question. One thing, somewhat extravagant and calculated to prove offensive to even many sober, well meaning Christians, I now strenuously advocated; that was, the practicability of miracles, in modern times. I held that provided we had the same proportion of faith, which the Apostles had, the same effects would follow. Nor do I yet perceive any formidable objection to this opinion. But the overaction of the passions in religion; like drunkenness or gluttony, is not only blamable but also pernicious. The ardor and frequency of religious exertions soon began to effect dreadful ravages in my constitution; and disorder and inability imperatively demanded relaxation from an oppressive servitude. Alas, seemingly too late, I began to reflect on the advice of Solomon: "be not righteous over much, why shouldst thou destroy thyself?"* Beholding all the symptoms of consumption, attended with peculiar aggravation, I became apprehensive of a speedy dissolution Reflecting on past endeavors to qualify myself for that sacred office, to which through the help of God I had now attained, I could not restrain my la-

*Eccl. 7. 16.

mentations on account of its seemingly premature termination. My soul, in sacred fervor, sent forth strong ejaculations to the throne of the Eternal, and dared to assume the language of expostulation with the Almighty. "O cause of all causes, origin, and governor of all events, thou seest the state to which my body is reduced, by my well meant efforts to serve the kingdom of thy dear Son, but if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole: and should it please thee, that I may serve thee, in that office, to which I have waded through seas of affliction and difficulty, interpose on my behalf." Scarcely had I uttered these expostulations, when every unpleasant symptom disappeared with the rapidity of lightning! So perfectly was I restored, that to the astonishment of my friends, I resumed preaching the next Sabbath.

A few months after this event, a respectable female, at whose house I had frequently held meetings for prayer and exhortation, became sick, apparently unto death. Of her circumstances I had not been apprized, till her husband requested the prayers of my congregation on her behalf, accompanying this request with another, that I should visit her the next day, as she had resolved to submit to a surgical operation, which, it was feared, she could not survive. Accordingly, I attended. Several of her friends from a distance, and two surgeons had arrived. I besought them to delay the operation till the next day, and preached that evening at her house. She heard with great attention, fearing that sermon should be the last she could ever attend. I selected as the subject of reflection, the words of Christ relative to Lazarus:* "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." I was much inclined to make an entire application of the text, but my faith received several repulses. The danger of exposing myself to ridicule, with several other considerations, powerfully operated as restraints. Notwithstanding, I felt as if commissioned to announce good news to the broken hearted. I therefore, unhesitatingly declared, in my discourse, that the sickness of our friend would not be unto death, and that she would most surely recover! On the next morning, appearances were so favorable as to induce the surgeons to decline the operation, and excite confidence in her friends. Within two days the symptoms totally disappeared, and on the following Sabbath, she attended worship at the usual place, travelling one mile on foot.

In the happiness which I then enjoyed, I could only be exceeded by the spirits of just men made perfect. Visiting from house to house, I prayed and exhorted the people to reformation. Mr. Cunningham, a Presbyterian Minister, residing in the neighbourhood, being a strenuous Calvinist, and fearing my proceedings might have an evil tendency on his flock, opposed my opinions. Having spent a whole evening in controversy with this man, who

*John 11. 4.

manifestly felt disappointed at the result of our conversation, and being much concerned on his account, I spent the greater part of that night in prayer to God, for the emancipation of mankind, from prejudice and spiritual thraldom. Towards the close of that exercise, I became like Paul * so enraptured with joy and divine confidence, that I knew not whether I remained in the body, or had exchanged worlds. This impression remained so strong the next morning, that I could scarcely believe myself an inhabitant of this barren world, till convinced by the surrounding scenery.

Shortly afterwards, being ardently engaged on behalf of my congregation, that God would revive his work among them, on retiring to rest, I enjoyed a return of the same happy and celestial influence. Whether in dream or vision, I was unable to determine, but I thought a Seraph entered my room filling it with a luminous effulgence, exceeding ten fold the brightness of the Sun: and whilst I distinctly perceived every part of the room, the position of every article of furniture, my own, and that of the apparition, I heard a voice, saying: read 1 Kings 3. 10,11, and the room became gradually dark, as the light withdrew at one of the windows. I then found, I stood before the window, looking after the light, and had some difficulty in groping my way to my bed: the night being dark, and the time about two o'clock in the morning. I would not allow myself to sleep again that night, being afraid of forgetting the direction. Having examined the passage as soon as the light of day appeared, I found to my great satisfaction, what I always believed to be a gracious intimation, in answer to prayer. That day being Sabbath; an extraordinary influence seemed to rest on the people. I trust it was the beginning of months to some, and a time of serious impression to many. May the God of mercy save mankind, from hardness of heart and disbelief of his holy word!

These things are not related, from a desire of obtaining credit for what may appear to many incredible, but the historian ought to relate facts without regard to consequences, and as a majority of those who are acquainted with the writer, may probably deem him at present rather sceptical than enthusiastic, the above narrative should be esteemed a mark of candor, and not an attempt to proselyte to an opinion.

Resolving to visit other parts of the Redeemer's inheritance, notwithstanding a general remonstrance from all my friends in that district, I left the north of Ireland; and journeyed towards the South, preaching repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus. On my departure, I was presented by the Episcopal Clergyman, with the following certificate, in the most voluntary manner:—

"The bearer, Mr. Thompson, has resided for some time in this neighbourhood, and from what I have both seen and heard, I be-

*2 Cor. 12. 2

lieve him to be a most zealous Christian, and a truly pious character. He taught the most respectable children of this place, and was an indefatigable laborer, in disseminating the word of God amongst his neighbours and friends. This is truly certified by me.

N. ROGERS, *Curate of Taboine.*"

July, 1813.

As the Methodist Conference sat in Dublin, in July, I attended, and was introduced to the amiable Dr. Coke, one of the Methodist Episcopal fathers, and director of the Methodist Foreign Missions, to whom I was recommended by Matthew Langtree, Chairman of the Derry district. The Dr. was then preparing for the voyage to Ceylon, and promised to send for me the next year; but the well-meaning and very zealous Dr. died on the voyage: though for some time before, he was accustomed to say he only lived for the East. However, the object was not lost: the men who went with him, prosecuted his design with becoming steadfastness, but not with the vigor nor success that would have attended the personal efforts of Dr. Coke.

It may not be thought unseasonable to say somewhat of this leader of Methodism. And were his followers as truly imitators of his moral character, as of his zeal, much of the disgrace that attaches to the profession of religion, and especially to that of Methodism, would pass away. He appeared to be a man of very polite manners, a part of education almost generally despised among Methodists. He had an accurate and clear articulation, and made a good and agreeable address. He was one of the few literary characters that have appeared as advocates of the Sect; for Methodism, in all its stages, has never been able to boast of ten preachers, that truly merited the name of Classical scholars. Benson and Coke were both men of Classical abilities, but religious enthusiasm, I should rather say, superstitious zeal, darkened the counsel and beclouded the understanding of both. They have left us commentaries; but without entering into a comparison of their particular merits, though both have no doubt contributed to the advantage of devotion, they are both (to use the language of one of the sect) "full of religious nonsense." They have, therefore, been both superseded, in a great degree, by Clarke. It will scarcely be believed, that the English Conference should enjoin upon every Minister, to provide himself with a copy of Benson's Bible, which, in connexion with Wesley's Notes and Sermons, they have established as the standard of Orthodoxy. But the secret can be easily unravelled. They well know that Dr. Clarke is, with them, like Gulliver among the Lilliputians, and therefore, influenced by that low spirit of envy that dwells in cowards' bosoms, they know that their little short-lived fame can only attract notice, when real merit suffers by detraction. Dr. Clarke is the only man of a truly great and original character, who has retained a

standing among the Methodists: and, be it known, that his connexion with them, has been to him a source of mingled feelings. The cup he has drank at their hand, has frequently had such a proportion of wormwood and gall, that a less submissive soul than the Doctor's, would not have condescended to drink. Any person of critical sagacity, who reads the Doctor's Commentary, cannot fail to perceive the traits of an adventurous and original mind, and a plodding industry, labouring to select, from a vast magazine of valuable materials, much useful matter: but for want of a Classical neatness and a systematical discernment, his work is *rudis indigestaque moles*. But I have said enough. Since the Bristol Conference, of 1820, if I mistake not, Dr. Clarke has had no official standing, at least in public administration, among the Methodists, though the matter is kept as mute as possible. Indeed, no man of learning and originality, can ever live with satisfaction, in the school of fanatical confusion; and had the Doctor not possessed a considerable share of superstitious fear, in connexion with a desire of worldly interest and popularity, he could not have remained so long in the ranks of Methodism. But he always seemed to me, a man that was more willing to be King of beggars, than servant of rulers. His Commentary proves him a Unitarian Universalist in disguise; and notwithstanding all the heap of heterogeneous sentiments intermixed, no more conclusive arguments have ever been published to the world against modern Orthodoxy, than those which his Commentary supply.

Pursuing my narrative, during the year 1813 and part of 1814, I itinerated over a great part of the provinces of Ulster and Leinster, travelling many hundreds of miles, and preaching two or three times a day. Many hours of rapturous delight I enjoyed, but not without many intervening seasons of painful experience. To describe the chequered scenes of this year, would fill a volume, highly interesting to many of my readers. But I forbear. I began now to learn human nature, in all its varied forms, the knowledge of which is rather painful than pleasant, in certain circumstances.

On the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne, an opening for Missionary adventures appeared to offer in France. I left Ireland for England, but through stress of weather, we were forced to put in at Holyhead, in Wales, from which I travelled on foot to Bangor Ferry. Here, and at Carnarven, St. Asaph, Landrust, Denbigh, and Holywell, I preached, and spent some time very agreeably. In traversing North Wales, I preached sometimes, and attended the preaching of some others, when one half of the audience could not understand five sentences during the discourse. It is usual to see the people attend, whether the service be in English or Welsh, for manner and gesture seem all that is necessary for the instruction of a sensitive people. But let it not be understood that this is spoken exclusively of the inhabitants of Wales, though it applies to them as well as to any people. During all my expe-

rience as a preacher among mankind, for one man that was under the direction of the understanding, there appeared one hundred under the controul of appetite or passion. So manifest is this to the discerning eye, that were it not for the observation of the Apostle, that "God has subjected the creation to vanity,"* I should be almost inclined to admit the Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity, or, like Origen and Plato, imagine that God has thrown out of Heaven a class of lapsed intelligences, to atone for their misconduct, by grovelling, like the serpent, for a season, in the dust!

Travelling to the South, and preaching in almost every town and village, I arrived at the great metropolis of the world. Here I was placed in a very unpleasant situation. Thinking of no evil, and fearing none, I arrived at the City Road Chapel; but when I applied to my pocket for my book, containing several introductory letters, and all the money I had, lo! all had fled; and I was left an entire stranger. without introduction or friend. The Methodists appeared as unwilling to countenance me, as if they had been assured of imposition. After gazing for some hours, like thousands of mankind, on their first approach to this City, at an immense world, thrown into a heap, exciting in the mind the apprehension of magic or enchantment, rather than a conviction of reality, I passed on towards Dover. I suppose that my good London friends, sufficiently conscious of what they were themselves, and believing I might resemble them, forwarded notices of caution to the preachers on the way to Dover, though I had not been one penny of expense to any of them: for, perceiving my letters gone, and the probability of suspicion, I disposed of an excellent watch, which I had, for less than half value, in order to avoid the appearance of dependency.

Arriving at Rochester. I called at the house of Mr. Griffith, Superintendent of the Rochester circuit, and that year, President of the English Conference. The manner of this gentleman's address, first excited the apprehension of the London artifice, which I afterwards had reason to believe was put in operation against me. I relate the conversation which passed between me and this preacher, who being one of the oldest, and esteemed one of the ablest Methodists in England, will show the liberality of his mind, and the extent of Methodistic Theology. Griffith, where do you come from, Sir? Thompson—Ireland. G. What is your object in coming to this country? T. To preach among you, for a short time. G. That is strange, indeed. T. I hope Sir, you will not imitate two of the disciples of Christ, by opposing a man's efforts to cast out devils, though he be not one of your countrymen? G. If you wish to cast out devils, you should have stayed in Ireland, and not come here; we have no need of your assistance. T. I am glad you have succeeded so well. I feared that there were devils

*Rom. 8. 20.

in England as well as Ireland. G. What do you mean by casting out devils; do you believe that there were devils cast out of men? T. Sir, I do not understand all the Scriptures literally; I follow the literal sense as far as I can, but when such language as that to which the reference is made, occurs, I think it was spoken in accommodation to the opinions and capacity of men: for I cannot think that God is angry or repents, as the Scriptures say. G. Is not God angry with the wicked every day? T. I hope not. He may disapprove their conduct and punish them for their sin, and as we suppose parents to be angry with their children when they offend, and are corrected for their offence, we may have transferred the idea of anger to God, but we ought not to make a literal application to him of human passions. G. I am sorry you called at my house; you are dangerous—you are far gone in Socinianism, and on the very verge of Deism—I will have nothing to say to a man who can torture the Scriptures! T. Sir, I will soon quit your house, but I am sorry for you—I scarcely know what Socinianism means. I have never read a book nor conversed with a man bearing the character: but if to read my Bible and understand it, be Socinianism, I am not afraid of the name. Calling nicknames is the folly of children, but I desire to put away childish things. G. I will not bid you farewell, neither shall I give you my hand. T. Can you pray for me? G. I cannot. T I have decidedly the advantage of you, for I can bid you adieu, and pray for you, and in both be like my master. May God pity you, Sir, farewell!

Leaving Rochester, I proceeded to Canterbury and spent a few days with the friends in that city; then advanced to Dover, where I was very kindly received by Mr. Robinson, Superintendent of that Circuit. I preached twice, to a very respectable audience, with great acceptation, and had a kind invitation, from the commanding officer, to preach in the Castle, to the Derry regiment, then quartered in that station. Both Canterbury and Dover are delightful places for an agreeable residence.

Passing over to France, I found the political affairs of that country, in a very fluctuating condition. I therefore accepted a situation in the Calais Academy, as Professor of the English and Latin Languages. Having about fifty young gentlemen from London and its vicinity, under my care, I thought it necessary, for their religious instruction, to have worship on the Sabbath. I accordingly obtained leave, and held service in English, every Sabbath, in one of the Lecture rooms. Assisted by some of the English inhabitants, I got a place fitted for worship in the city, and commenced regular meetings, which were well and respectfully attended. About this time, a young Clergyman of the institution, became dangerously diseased, and after a short time was abandoned by the physicians. A priest attended to receive his confession and administer the last rites. The Rector of the Ac-

ademy began to bemoan his loss of the young man, as he had been a very useful and much esteemed teacher, among the students in general. I asked what the Physician called the disease of which he complained, and was answered: "Phthisis pulmonalis." I apprehended there was some mistake, and made intimation thereof to the Rector; but he assured me the character of the Physician stood very high. Notwithstanding, said I, if the young man be left entirely to my direction, I fear not to warrant his recovery. He replied, that if any thing could be done, his friends would feel highly gratified. I asked him to converse with his Confessor, and if he would co-operate all would go well Matters being adjusted, I pronounced my opinion freely, as follows: "The young man's complaint was occasioned by violence in religious exercises; I have often heard him beat his breast with his fists,* in such a manner as to excite apprehension for his life. Let the Confessor strictly prohibit every species of violence, and enjoin the necessity of the greatest calmness in devotion; let the young man be removed to the best country air, and a light but nutritive regimen be observed, allowing him, however, the occasional use of wine. These directions were implicitly obeyed, and in twenty days, the despaired of patient returned perfectly well!

On this occasion, I had the following dialogue with one of the Priests. Priest. You are not a Priest, but a Layman. T. I preach, and think I have as good authority for so doing as the Catholic clergy. P. If you die in your present state, you will learn that you are awfully mistaken. T. I am not afraid to die. P. You are a heretic, and all heretics will be damned. T. You say so, but I have no evidence of the truth of your assertions. P. Your religion is not taught in the Bible, nor sanctioned by the Church. T. I believe it is taught in the Bible; and as to the sanction of the Church, it is to me a matter of indifference. The Church sanctions many things evidently absurd. P. There are opinions held by Protestants, as absurd as those of the Catholic Church. T. I think not. Do you believe the wafer, in the Sacrement of the Eucharist, contains the whole body, blood, and Divinity of Jesus Christ? P. I do. T. God forbid, I should be your first communicant; for, from all that I have learned of Mathematics, I would eat the whole of your God, and leave nothing for the rest! P. I say you hold to mysteries as well as we. T. For myself, I hold no mystery, nor doctrine that is manifestly oppposed to the evidence of my senses.

The Catholics becoming afraid of the Protestant interest gaining advantage, by the great number of foreigners, that were daily entering France, in multitudes, commenced a persecution in the South, which might have assumed a very serious aspect over a great part of the kingdom, had not the return of the Emperor from Elba, produced a change in the state of religious and national af-

*A miserable religion indeed, which consists in the abuse of the body!

fairs. Whatever he was, he was the man, that, of all others, knew best to manage the French nation: and by him the reins of government were so conducted, as that order, peace, liberality, and safety, were maintained throughout the Empire, which never could be done by his successor.

Seeing no prospect of doing much good in France, I embarked for England. To make any remarks on the French character, is altogether unnecessary, in a country where it is so well known; but there can be no impropriety in saying, that France appeared to me too barren a soil for Missionary cultivation. Having arrived at Dover, on a Sabbath morning, just as worship commenced, I resolved not to preach that day, and therefore not to attend worship in that place. Proceeding westward along the coast, I arrived at Hythe, and as afternoon service had commenced, I entered the Methodist church, believing no person there had ever seen me. But at the close of the sermon, the preacher came down, whilst the congregation sang a hymn, and advancing to the pew where I sat, asked me: "Is not your name Thompson?" I answer in the affirmative. You must then, said he, indulge me in the liberty of telling the congregation, that you will preach for them at 6 o'clock! I could not refuse. I therefore preached that evening and the next, to a very large congregation, and then proceeded onward, preaching at the different villages and towns, till I arrived at Ninfield in Sussex, where I remained during the spring of 1815, with a very affectionate and respectable congregation.

Now commenced a new epoch in my life and ministry. By boarding at the house of a Methodist, in Newton Limavady, Ireland, I became a Methodist in 1812; again, by boarding at the house of a Restorationist, I became a Restorationist, in 1815 The process was easy and natural to a heart, candid, and warm with the desire of human happiness—and to a reflecting mind, the doctrine of Universalism, is the logical conclusion, that inevitably follows from the premises. Calvinism and Arminianism: so that all men may rest confidently assured, that if the two premises be true and correct, the conclusion is just as true and certain as the premises. Therefore, if Universalism be not true, Calvinism and Arminianism must, inevitably, be false and deceptious!

The Rev. Elhanan Winchester, had successfully labored in that vicinity. The conversion of Mr. Vidler and his church to Mr. Winchester's religious views, had produced a considerable excitement in the neighbourhood of Battle. The gentleman with whom I lived, was a member of Mr. Vidler's congregation The first time he introduced the doctrine of Restitution, was when walking in his garden one day for amusement, he being a gardener by occupation, his little daughter having pulled some flowers, he thus addressed me: "Sir, I refer to your decision a certain case, which you may think very trifling, but which I esteem of great importance. My little child has offended me by plucking tulips;

for the first offence, I rebuked her; and for the second, I beat her; but she has just now become guilty the third time; shall I suffer her, to destroy my tulips with impunity? shall I take a rod and beat her proportionately to her age, ability, and crime? or shall I seize a pole such as I may be able to wield, and beat her while I am able? I wait, Sir, for your determination."

Not aware of his intention, I replied, Sir, as a father you will, no doubt, choose the medium, to correct in proportion to the child's circumstances and not your own. "O Sir, said he, "how differently you judge out of the pulpit, from your declarations when preaching! In the pulpit you tell me, that if my child offend, I must beat it with as heavy an instrument of torure as I am able to use! and that I must never desist, or if I do, I forfeit my honor everlastingly!" These remarks had a stupifying effect upon my mind; and never could I rescue my doctrine of endless misery from the shock it that moment received.

The dialogues of Winchester now fell into my hands; and on reading them, the most painful warfare commenced in my mind. I saw my arguments so irreparably destroyed, and the opposite doctrine to that which I had so zealously promulgated, so clearly established, that I knew not how to conduct. I cast away the book, resolving I should not suffer myself to be ensnared by all the ingenuity of the writer—but again my desire returned. To know the fate of man as accurately as possible, appeared highly desirable, and meritorious of the deepest research. I again got the dialogues and read: and as I read, my mind assented to the doctrine. Alas! said I, my ministry is at an end! I cannot hold this doctrine and preach contrary to my convictions: and having changed once, if I do so again, I shall lose all credit as a minister; and still more especially, if I attempt to announce a doctrine so unpopular, and so universally detested by all denominations. But what can I do? Though I should be ruined in the world, I cannot resist the evidence! and having so said, I struck the book against the wall, and broke the binding in several places!

Having adopted the doctrine of Restitution, I thought it dishonest to receive the salary from the congregation, seeing I could not propagate its views of religious truth. I therefore gave notice of my desire to visit Scotland, and consequently to be released from my charge. Never have I since been so agreeably situate as I was there; in the midst of a rich, beautiful, and abundant country; in view of the British channel and the delightful scenery of the coast. But alas! what is the world to a discontented mind? What happiness can result from any thing, to a soul conscious of delinquency in the performance of duty? O Father of lights, lead me in the way of truth, and grant me an honest heart to follow its dictates without hesitation!

On leaving Nunfield, I saw myself as an eject from society. I felt considerable distress of mind, and was disposed to utter the

complaints of Jeremiah:* "wo is me, that I have been born a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth!" From the congregation I received the following testimony:—

"The Rev. John S. Thompson, from France, having preached in some of the adjacent towns and villages, was requested to visit this place, where he has officiated as Minister for three months. As he desires to visit North Britain, we hereby certify, that his character, as far as known to us, is becoming the Gospel; and his ministry has been acceptable here."

THOMAS BONTER,
Ninfield, May, 1815. P. LINFIELD,
J. TESTER.

Here the heat of my devotion to Sectarianism was reduced almost to zero: not because of indifference to religion, but because I could no longer pronounce the Shibboleth of any sect: I was despised to a degree by all, and felt, in myself, an equal apathy to the pretentions of all: notwithstanding their multifarious manner of crying, *lo! here is Christ, and lo! he is there.* The more I investigated the doctrines, proposed by the different claimants of orthodoxy and infallibility, the more cause appeared for dissatisfaction; and on the other hand, the icy regions of what was called *Rational Christianity*, afforded me no encouragement, but rather indicated such frigidity as excited the apprehension of being frozen to death!

Returning to London, I felt almost no interest in any thing, and scarcely visited any of the public places. Neither Palace nor Parliament excited in me the least glow of curiosity. At an early period of my life, I became disgusted with the abuses and injustice of the administration in Ireland: and my father and several of my relations being engaged in the rebellion, I lost all attachment to politics; and though severally called to testify allegiance to his Majesty's Government, I never could consent; being resolved that if no change should take place in the affairs of Ireland, I would, at all events, terminate my history, in the United States of America. After a short residence at London, sufficient to show me what a sink of dissipation that metropolis really is, I proceeded onward as far as Sheffield. Finding sufficient encouragement here, I remained at *Broom Hall Academy*, for four months, as teacher of the French and Latin Languages.

I now became acquainted with N. Phillips, D. D. Minister of the Unitarian church, and a very learned and able Divine. His sermons appeared to me chef d'oeuvres in Composition and Theology: every one which I heard, produced in me painful reflections, that I had lost so much time among a set of babblers

*Chap. 15. 10.

in tradition, who, instead of being worthy the name of clergymen, were only adapted to excite disgust at the religion, which they so malapertly attempted to vindicate. If ever heaven let loose locusts* in human form, to destroy the fruits of the christian vineyard, they were ignorant, proud pretenders to the ministry of the Gospel, who eat the flesh and clothed themselves with the wool, but fed not the flock of God's inheritance.† A sensible man will be ashamed to profess a business, in which he has no skill nor adroitness; but it seems many can excuse both their ignorance and incapacity, by a pretended obedience to an imperative call from Heaven! Surely it is high time to awake out of sleep, and disabuse mankind, by delivering them from the influence of so baleful and infectious a pestilence. If men believe themselves moved divinely to the holy office of the ministry, let them show their honesty and sincerity, by proper exertions to obtain qualifications. To say God will provide them with all things necessary, is as presumptuous and absurd as to tell the farmer not to till his field, because God has promised both seed time and harvest.‡

During my residence at Sheffield, I read a number of Theological works, chiefly Unitarian, and thereby became convinced of the absurdity and impossibility of the doctrine of the Trinity. Wardlaw's "Lectures on Socinianism," and Yates' "Vindication of Unitarianism," in reply, were perused by me with great interest: and I could not but be astonished at the ease and lucidity, with which Yates overthrew the most subtle and forcible arguments of Wardlaw. He that reads carefully these two productions, need go no farther to seek evidence, either for or against the doctrine of the Trinity. Yates' reply is a standard work. It is written on the Arian view, and well adapted for the initiation of proselytes to the doctrine of the Divine Unity. Hence I became an *Arian Restorationist*, and remained invariably so, till at Philadelphia, I advanced to Unitarian Universalism about the beginning of the year 1823.

Leaving Sheffield in the beginning of November, 1815, I proceeded to Edinburgh, the Capital of Scotland, and the most picturesque city in the world. On entering from the west, by Prince st. having the New town on the left, and the view of the Castle and the Old town on the right, the thoughts are raised towards the inconceivable grandeur and sublimity of another world, for in vain do we look for any thing similar in the present! From the Castle, looking down upon the New City, which for regularity is unrivalled in the world, (Philadelphia itself being a motley huddle in comparison,) turning to the right, and viewing the grotesque irregularity of the Old City, whose lofty buildings, some of which are fourteen or even sixteen stories in height, are piled on irregular craggy rocks, aspiring one over another like the appearance of the Alps, and the view terminated by abrupt perpen-

* Rev. 9. 1—12. † Ez. 34. 1—11. ‡ Gen. 8. 22.

dicular mountains, projecting towards the city: looking forward between the old and new towns, about two miles from the Castle, on Leith, the second sea port in Scotland, and the wide spread Firth of Forth, bespangled with its hundreds of ships of all size and tonnage, the mind labours in vain to express in language, the impressions made by the surrounding scenery.

Agreeably to my intention in visiting Scotland, I entered James' University, as a fourth year student of Literature and Hebrew; and of course, belonged to the Natural Philosopby Class, at that time, expertly conducted by Professor Playfair, the most learned Mathematician and Naturalist ever Edinburgh could boast: his "Outlines of Natural Philosophy," used as a text book for the class, his "Euclid," "Theory of the Earth," and other writings, are vouchers for his superiority in the above departments. The chair of the Greek class was respectfully filled by Dunbar, whose edition of Moore's Greek Grammar, is the best student's guide in existence. The Moral Class was also well conducted by Professor Brown, whose work on Philosophy does credit both to himself and the University. The Chemistry Class was crowdedly attended, the audience being seldom less than one thousand. The worthy and very eloquent Professor, Dr. Hope, is too Philanthropic and liberal to allow of any restriction on admittance: the doors stand open for all who feel disposed to enter; and indeed the attraction is neither small nor ineffectual. Assisted by two expert Chemists, the experiments designed to illustrate the subjects of the lectures, are very grand and brilliant.

This is a justly far famed Medical Institution; the students in that department, are therefore most numerous. The Monroes have maintained a respectable standing as Anatomical Lecturers; and Mr. Fife is so experienced a demonstrator, that he appears as skilful in the use of the knife as the men of Benjamin were in that of the sling:* that is, he can cut a man to a hair's breadth and not miss. But enough has been said on this subject. The University is worthy of all praise, if we except the laxity of its discipline, and the hereditary nature of its Professor's claims. The Library consists of about 70,000 volumes, to which on paying two dollars, annually, every student receives a card of admittance, bearing the following inscription, except the variation of the date and name:—"Joannes S. Thompson, civis Bibliothecae Academiae Edinburgenae a die 12 Octobr. 1815, ad diem 12 Octobr. 1816." And on paying abont twenty dollars he obtains a similar card or ticket of admittance to one of the classes, and so on of the rest.

The number of students at Edinburgh, vary from 2500 to 3000, of all ages and countries. Nor is it strange to see the youth of fourteen and the hoary head of seventy years, beating up to the same class, with the same design full in view. At Glasgow and

*See Judges 20, 16.

St. Andrews, the students wear scarlet gowns, but at Edinburgh there is no badge of distinction. As to the particular character of the Scotch Universities, we can safely recommend Glasgow for systematical discipline and eminence in Philosophy; Edinburgh for liberality and Medicine; and St. Andrews for retirement and Theology. The annual expense will be about $100 at St Andrews, $200 at Glasgow, and $300 at Edinburgh. The Scotch Universities exceed all others in Philosophy, but they cannot come into competition with Dublin, Oxford, or Cambridge, in Mathematics and Languages.

At Edinburgh I became acquainted with the Rev. T. S. Smith, author of "Illustrations of the Divine Government," who was then a fellow-student at the University, and Minister of the Unitarian congregation at St. Andrew's church, near the North Bridge. In stature, he is a small man, but of a great mind, and an excellent preacher. His congregation, having borne the name, *Universalist*, for several years, changed it for a more popular, and indeed in Scotland a more suitable appellation.

Before the visit of Winchester to England, little had been done for Universalism in that country, since the days of Cromwell. The scheme of Relly * appeared too visionary, to excite serious attention, on the part of liberal and rational christians; and the enthusiastic and traditionist were too fond of a Pharasaic Paradise and a Mahometan Hell. The preaching of Winchester attracted the notice of many respectable Unitarians, whose candor made conviction easy, and confession natural. Several of the Unitarian clergy soon began to publish their accession to the scheme of the "Merciful Doctors."† The Universalists reciprocated the favor: and soon after the return of Winchester to America, all the Universalists, with a few exceptions, advanced to meet

*About 1760, James Relly, who commenced his career under the patronage of Whitfield, "ended," says Southey, "in forming a heresy of his own, which had the merit at least, of being a humaner scheme than that of his Master, however untenable in other respects. Shocked at the intolerable notion of reprobation, and yet desirous of holding the tenet of election, he fancied that sin was to be considered as a disease, for which the death of our Redeemer was the remedy: and that, as evil had been introduced into human nature by the first Adam, who was of the earth, earthly, so must it be expelled by the second, who is from Heaven, and therefore Heavenly. Pursuing this notion, he taught that Christ, as a Mediator, was united to mankind, and by his obedience and sufferings, had as fully restored the human race to the Divine favor, as if all had obeyed and suffered in their own persons. So he preached a finished salvation, which included the final restitution of all fallen intelligences." See Life of Wesley, vol. 2. p. 229.

We have applied the appellation "visionary," and Southey the epithet "heresy," to the scheme of Relly; and fear that some other may add as a characteristic "licentious," before the description be complete. Relly was assisted in England by Mr. Cudworth; and his system was introduced into America by John Murray, about the time of the declaration of Independence.

†A name given to the Universalists of the third century.

their Unitarian brethren, and adopted their name. This reciprocity of liberal sentiments, was productive of very happy effects. The warmth of the Universalist, invigorated the benumbed limbs of the Unitarian destructionist; and the coolness and deliberation of the Unitarian, modulated the effervescence of Universalist enthusiasm. Hence arose what has been called the "New School of Unitarianism," which like the New Testament, excelling the Old in glory,* rapidly accumulates disciples, and threatens the Old School, with a practical application of its own doctrine, namely, *annihilation!*

In the Spring of 1816, I returned to England, and taught the French Language, in Kendal and Lancaster, during that year; not being able to preach, because of the unsettled state of my religious opinions. The Unitarians were willing to encourage me, though I differed from them in many things, but the Methodists were unwilling that I should preach among them, without entire conformity, at least, in public: for I had then, and some time after, so many doubting brethren among the Methodists, as would have made public censure, for disbelief of the Trinity or endless misery, an unsafe experiment. Indeed, so well was the doctrine of Restitution received among many of the Methodists, at that time, that several of the Preachers had ventured to defend it in their public discourses. The doctrine of the Divine Sonship, being strongly opposed by Dr. Clarke, several of the leading Preachers, such as Benson, Watson, and Moore, had run into the opposite extreme, so far as to publish sentiments purely Arian, and consequently not very remote from my own.

I was now strongly importuned to join the established religion, as being the most liberal, and indeed so it was, if liberality mean indifference, for it was of little importance, whether a man were a Deist, a Trinitarian, a Unitarian, a Universalist, a Protestant, or a Catholic, provided his pride, interest, or indifference, inclined him to the establishment. There being, however, no mention of *endless misery*, in the creeds of the National Church, every Clergyman is at liberty to preach Restoration, or damnation, just as he pleases. But to join the establishment, I could not consent, there being so much idolatrous nonsense, in its prayers, and so much anti-christian hierachy in its discipline: nothing being clearer in mathematical demonstration, than the total repugnancy of episcopacy, in all its forms, to the plain and perspicuous instructions of Christ to his disciples, when they contended for the mastery,* However, as I could then faithfully admit the doctrine of the Nicean creed, and all that Bishop Bull had written in its defence, I published "A Vindication of the Deity and Atonement of Jesus, and a refutation of the Calvinistic and Socinian heresies;" the first edition of which was nearly all sold in two weeks after it came from the press: and was well received by the mem-

*See Luke 9. 48. and 22. 24—28.

bers of the established church, and more especially by the Methodists in general.

This publication produced a movement among the dry bones,* and received two replies The one from a Calvinist Minister, named *Pierce*, which was a most foul and abusive production, entitled, "Six Letters to the Rev. John S. Thompson." The other by a Unitarian Minister, *Joh Harrison*, entitled, "The Testimony of Scripture for the Unity and Supremacy of God." This was a well written, temperate, and argumentative publication, worthy the pen and heart of its learned author.†

These publications elicited several others, and the controversy continued for about one year; towards the close of which, I again published: "A Second Vindication of the Deity and Atonement of Jesus, including testimonies of the most celebrated writers, from the commencement of the Christian era to the present time." This production was soon pronounced an Arian heresy, and therefore proved offensive to my friends in general. The offence was augmented by the following notice at the end: "There will soon be published, a discourse on the restitution of all things, exhibiting the benevolence of God, in the grand scheme of Divine Providence, by the Rev. John S. Thompson."

My honesty in expressing my sentiments, nearly destroyed my fellowship with the whole body of professing christians, and caused me much bitterness. I appeared almost as an isolated individual, feeling no interest in any party, nor almost in any terrene object. The subject of religion seemed to me to wear a gloomy picture. For a time I desisted from every religious meeting whatever, and for several months, dreaded insanity. My application to study was inexpressibly intense, I never slept more than about two or three hours. The Deity of Jesus, the immortality of the soul, and some other subjects, continually kept my mind in excitement. Having adopted Materialism, on the Priestleyan plan, I could not admit the existence of spirits in our world; for all antiquity supposed spirits to have been originally men: but if there had been no resurrection, there could be no human spirits.

I will now proceed to relate things, just as I have before done, agreeably to the views and impressions I then had; leaving every

*Ez. 37. 7. †This gentleman died at Preston, Lancashire, remarkably sudden, and as his name was used in some of the public papers for a certain purpose, after his death, I cannot but add a word to his memory.

Mr. Harrison was preparing a new Dictionary for the Press, and whilst writing the word *Subpœna*, he fell dead at his desk! Some said it was a judgment for his persevering zeal in behalf of Unitarianism; both he and his worthy predecessor having taught a theological class: but he was liable to a kind of catalepsy, and whilst in my presence, on a visit at the house of a learned friend, Mr. John Thompson, he fell down apparently dead, at the table. I presume when writing the word *Subpœna*, his disorder had returned, and falling either with violence, he died, or by after neglect, he suffocated! He was an upright, well conducted, and able Minister.

one to form his own opinion. I acknowledge my mind was in a state of great excitement, at the time I had those extraordinary impressions; but it did not then seem to me, nor does it yet, that the degree of excitement was adequate to the phenomena. I awoke one night, and heard a considerable noise in my room. I listened carefully for some time, and the sound was that of a thousand pens, writing in great haste what was dictated. I heard a voice very distinctly saying:—"In all your writings, be careful to represent Jesus as only the instrument of God in all he does." I immediately interrupted, by exclaiming: "silence, I'll not believe one of you." The noise immediately stopped, and I was often afterwards sorry, that I had interrupted the dictation.

I examined, but there was no person in the room, the door being locked, and none had yet arisen in the house. Not long after, sleeping in the same room, I awoke by pressure, which removed immediately on awaking. I began to reflect whether it was a dream, or an external force applied to my body. Whilst I doubted, some being took hold of my hands, and pressed them with violence, which excited in me great surprise. My hands were let loose, but in one minute, they were again seized, with renewed violence. I then cried: "let me loose! I believe! do not injure me! I am entirely satisfied of your existence!" The pressure on my hands was immediately removed, and I then felt greatly agitated, and tossed in my bed. In two minutes after, my hands were seized, a third time: I then complained loudly, but in a minute of time, I was again set at liberty. I leaped on the floor, determined that I would make full proof, whether any person had got into my room; though I believed that no man could apply so much strength, as I had experienced on my hands. The first thing I did was to examine the door, which I found as I had left it, locked, with the key in the inner side. I took the key out of the door, and again trying it, found it fast. I then groped all over the room, but found nobody. I retired to my bed, placing the key under me, and waiting for the light of day.

After a series of conflicts, too painful to describe, I came to the following resolutions:—"As I agree with the Methodists concerning the Divine origin of Christ, the efficacy of his atonement, the conditionality of salvation, and the indescribable torment of the wicked after death, I shall preach accordingly; going with them as far as I can, and remaining silent on subjects of difference. If there be less of hell, in another world, than many have imagined, there can arise no unfortunate mistake; and as to the Trinity, little now is said of it in public preaching: I will therefore submit." Though I resumed preaching, vigorously, among the Methodists, yet I never varied in my opinions, nor did I ever give them reason to believe, that my religious sentiments were otherwise than they really were. Moreover, when afterwards I was examined before a meeting of preachers, I confessed my

opinions had undergone no change, in approximation to theirs: and on a motion being made to oppose my preaching, till I should see fit to conform, a warmth of discussion ensued which excited alarm. The tumult, however, was soon quashed, but nothing was, nor could be done in relation to my case.

On leaving this part of England, I obtained recommendatory letters, from all the professional gentlemen of eminence, in that district: a great part of whom had been my pupils, during my residence among them. On offering as a candidate for the direction of a Grammar School, in the southern district of Lancaster, the following certificate is one of those, which were then presented to support my claims.

"*To the Trustees of the Grammar School Pilling, Lancashire.*

GENTLEMEN,

Understanding that Mr. John S. Thompson intends to offer himself as a candidate for the Mastership of the Grammar School of Pilling, we beg leave to offer our testimony in support of his application. We have been, for some time, in the habit of receiving lessons from him in the French language, in which he appeared to us to display great ability; and proved himself not only well acquainted with the French, but with the Latin and Greek classics We have reason, likewise, to believe him possessed of other qualifications, requisite for conducting the business of a school, such as a knowledge of commercial accounts, Mathematics, &c. We can further testify, that he has a very happy method of communicating his knowledge to others; and that from every thing we have observed of his character and attainments, he seems to be a very proper person to be entrusted with the education of youth; being exemplary in his conduct, and industrious in his habits. Should you be pleased to appoint him to the situation, we have not the least doubt, but that he will prove himself worthy of the confidence reposed in him.

We are Gentlemen,
Your Obed't humble serv'ts,

JOHN BEETHOM, CLERK, M. A.
Head Master of the Grammar School, Lancaster.
GEORGE MORELAND, CLERK,
Usher of the Grammar School, and Chaplain of the Castle, Lancaster.
ALLAN BRISCOE, CLERK, M. A.
Lancaster, July 30, 1817. *Lancaster.*

Not succeeding in my application, chiefly through apprehensions arising from my ministerial character, I obtained a situation equally agreeable to my mind, in the Academy at Ormskirk, as teacher of the French and Latin Languages. This institution is

superior to some of the French and American Colleges, and was attended by a number of students from America and the West Indies. There is a good Library, an excellent boarding house, a fine Orrery and Philosophical Apparatus, and from six to eight respectable teachers. The Episcopal church at this place, has an odd appearance. It was built by two sisters, the one of whom would have a steeple, the other a tower: and possessing all the ambition to govern, peculiar to the sex, both a tower and a steeple were built, which attract the attention of travellers, and occasion a frequent repetition of the story.

Here I continued my Theological inquiries, but having experienced great distress from the result of former investigations, I felt disposed to relinquish the ministry. Indeed, the years 1816 and 1817, were productive of such painful experience, as rendered life itself unsavory. On the Sabbath, I was often unable to endure preaching; it generally appeared to me a disgusting medley of irreligious nonsense, or a cold, dead, speculative descanting on certain abstract parts of ethics; and no medium could be obtained. If I attended with the *professed orthodoxy* of the times, *they were all enthusiastic contenders for what they neither knew themselves, nor were capable of making others understand:* and the Unitarians of that district appeared perfect antipods to the orthodox, being disposed only to admit of an Epicurean God, whom they placed as an idle spectator, in some infinitely remote Empyrean.

Fearing that I should fall into Deism, I obtained Leland's "Review of Deistical Writers;" and in order to give the work full influence on my mind, I abridged the whole three octavo volumes, which I interlarded with remarks and arguments from other writers, on the evidence of the Christian Religion. This exercise had a happy effect; it brought home to my heart the blessed religion of Jesus, which will ever profit by close investigation, and triumph in every trial and in every comparison. I thank my exalted Redeemer, that I never after felt any doubts, as to his divine mission, and the celestial origin of his holy doctrine. Truly it is the Gospel of the blessed God—it is life and immortality—it is the kingdom of heaven.

Desirous of relaxation in study, I changed the subject. I got an excellent copy of Baron Cuvier's "*Lecons d'Anatomie Comparee*," in five volumes octavo, with a hundred and fifty engravings. This is undoubtedly the best and most complete work on Anatomy, ever published to the world. All other productions of the kind, I ever saw, were comparatively boyish scribbles. The writings of Richerand, Abernethy, Lawrence, Good, Cooper, Cuvier, and T. Thomson, are the best Medical productions of the present age. I proceeded to the anatomy of animals, and became familiar with the use of the scalpel. No science tends more powerfully to impress on the mind, the superintendence of the Deity,

than the study of Anatomy. Indeed, God is more distinctly seen in the human structure and animal economy, than in all his other works.

In 1819, I removed to Liverpool, the second town for wealth, trade and commerce in the British dominions. Its shipping, public buildings, squares, markets, docks &c. are superior to any in the United States, but New-York and Liverpool bid fair to rival each other for many years. Here I followed my profession, *teacher of Languages*, and preached occasionally. No event of particular interest occurred at this place, except the progress I made in Medicine and Theology. I attended the Anatomical Lectures of Dr. Formby, and had serious intentions of betaking myself to to the habitual practice of Physic, which I had occasionally exercised for benevolent purposes. Possessing opportunities of a favorable nature for the prosecution of Biblical Criticism, I applied closely to this important branch of Theology. I obtained an Arabic Bible, and Syriac New Testament, and commenced with enthusiasm, the study of these ancient and important languages. Having made some progress, the beautiful Polyglot of Jay, printed at Paris, in nine volumes folio. fell into my hands, and I spent some time, in collating my Bible with the Arabic version of that splendid and valuable work. But much as Jay had done for the Christian world, the immense labors of Walton exceed those of the French Editor, as far as the light of the sun transcends that reflected by the pale queen of night. The labors of Origen, in the third century, were successfully imitated by Walton, in the seventeenth. The London Polyglot is an everlasting monument of industry, and boasts as great pre-eminence over all other works of the kind, as the vast city which gave it birth, over all other cities in the world.

Though I had access to immense collections of books, I could no longer read the confused, unmeaning piles of religious rubbish, so much applauded by the christian world in general. Indeed I can safely say, that, for seven long tedious years, I had been unable to obtain a single new idea in theology, from the many thousands of volumes which had passed through my hands: if I except a few, which were generally esteemed heretical and dangerous, probably because they differed from the numerous productions of *unthinking mimics*. How men can be capable of a sound understanding and moral honesty, and yet still continue to pester the world with useless books, scarcely differing except in title-page and manner of writing, is to me a paradox. But it is a painful fact, frequently experienced by the student, that the reading of a thousand volumes, will often add nothing to what he has derived from the perusal of ten, except a penitential sorrow for the loss of so much labor and time. Most certainly ignorance, not learning, is the greatest cause in the multiplication of books, for thousands become authors to tell only that which had been much

better told by another, of whose labors they were ignorant, by reason of their limited acquaintance with what had been previously done. That man, therefore who adds to the number of books in existence without condensing the information of many, or increasing the stock of knowledge: or who publishes a book merely to kill time, is a nuisance to society and is not free from impiety towards God, and injustice towards his fellow men! But alas! popularity is generally the index of ignorance and vulgarity, and the maxim of the day is, and has almost invariably been, "ignorance is the Mother of Devotion:" whilst the fact is, that ignorance is only the parent of Superstition, and perfect knowledge the cause of true devotion!

Meanwhile, I communicated to "The Christian Reflector," some papers which were published over the signature T, and were designed to disprove the doctrine of the Trinity and the worship of Jesus. Indeed from the summer of 1815, I differed, so essentially, from all sects, as not to have, consistently, ranked among the admirers of any system of religious opinion. Hence I was blamed for unsteadfastness and sometimes for dissimmulation; but to the latter charge my heart plead, "not guilty." Notwithstanding I labored for the last year at Liverpool, very earnestly in the cause of Methodism, for the warmth of devotion and zeal, common to that sect, was adapted to my gratification and enjoyment, though many things, in doctrine and practice, were very offensive.

Here I shall call the attention of the reader to an observation of some importance. I have said, that from the time I left Sheffield in 1815, I remained an Arian Restorationist, and I doubt not but thousands firmly believe, that when a man disbelieves the Deity of Jesus and endless misery, he loses his religion. But my soul is a witness to the contrary. I enjoyed as much zeal, love, devotion, divine influence, and was as great a revivalist, and as successful in the ministry, after my belief of the above opinions, as I ever was in all my life: and of this fact I could call many thousands to bear testimony. If ever I knew the love of Christ, I experienced that love as really and as fully, when I was the Unitarian, as when I assented to the Trinitarian view of the Redeemer's person. O yes, my soul magnifies the glory of his name and triumphs of his grace: and I fear not that he will lead me in the green pastures, and afterwards receive me to glory.

Methodism is manifestly on the decline in England, and throughout the British dominions. It is divided into many parts, which mutually threaten each other's ruin: and if the language of Christ be true, that a kingdom, divided against itself, cannot stand, we may look for the overthrow of Methodism at no remote period. What is called the *old connexion*, as yet remains the most numerous; and has adopted the name of *Wesleyan Methodists:* though if there be a contradiction in language, this is one; for the di-

rections of Wesley, as to the management of their external, and I may add internal policy, have been completely disregarded. The second division is generally called *Kilhamites*, after the name of their leader, who endeavored to establish something like Presbyterian discipline among them. The third class is denominated *Independents*, from the form of church government, which they have adopted. The fourth assumes the name *Primitive Methodists*, but they are more generally known by the appellation of *Ranters*. Each of the three last mentioned classes, may have about 200 preachers, and is rapidly increasing; for in proportion as the iron rod of oppression, wielded by the autocrats of the old connexion, is felt by the sheep of their pasture, they frequently leap the fence, and seek refuge among the more humble partisans of a similar name and profession. The fifth class has adopted the name of *Church Methodists*, who are headed by a Mr. Averil, formerly a Rector of the National Establishment. This party numbers about 20,000 members, who claim to be the only true Methodists: and indeed they are the only class who follow the direction of Wesley: "*never to separate from the established Church.*" The sixth division is distinguished by the name of *Unitarian Methodists*, who hold the discipline and many of the opinions of Wesley, but who reject the Trinity, and the Deity of Jesus. These have also their circuits and preachers, and are fast augmenting their ranks in different parts of England. All these six divisions have sprung, of late years, from the followers of Wesley, and each has its numerous adherents: but truth and experience bids me say, all of them have more or less facility in the useful arts of mutual backbiting and slander: for Methodists, generally speaking, seem to believe it not only innocent, but sometimes virtuous, to LIE *for the glory of God.* May God convert them, there is no denomination in the world, that more needs conversion in this respect, than the people called Methodists. Indeed, there seems to be a radical defect in the system; and a base talkativeness, appears a natural result of *telling experiences*, four fifths of the members being under necessity to practice deceit. Nor can it escape the notice of the careful observer, that *wherever fanaticism prevails, truth and morality are proportionately disregarded!* AN HOUR OF PENITENCE can atone for *a world of iniquity;* and uncivilized nature grows in such a soil, *unmolested* by the arts of improvement!

In the spring of 1822, I resolved to emigrate to America, of which I had thought for some years. I was so dissatisfied with all creeds, that I determined to renounce submission to all human compositions of the kind. This is not said to induce the rejection of church authority; every church has a right to form its own creed, agreeably to what it conceives to be the import and meaning of the christian doctrine and example; and this right certainly may be very lawfully extended to the exclusion of all who do not conform to its constitution: but no censure should be connec-

ted with resistance to the authority of any church or society; because all being alike free, have equal right to adopt or reject any form of creed or discipline, which may be deemed incompatible with the word of God, or the Apostolic example. Hence it occurred, that on leaving Liverpool, I neither sought nor obtained testimonials, from any religious denomination whatever, being resolved to remain neutral among the religionists of America, at least for one year. Notwithstanding the Superintendents of the different Academies, readily offered their testimonies on behalf of my moral character, and qualifications as a Teacher; and these I considered entirely sufficient for my purpose. Of them the following are inserted as specimens.

"I have been acquainted with Mr. John S. Thompson for near two years, and believe him fully competent to teach those branches of Literature which he professes: I have likewise heard of the rapid progress of his pupils, and have always considered him a Literary Character."

GEORGE SILVERSIDES,
Master of Kent Square Academy, Liverpool.

April 22, 1822.

"We certify that Mr. John Samuel Thompson has been a Teacher of English, French, and the Classics, in Liverpool, during the three last years; and that his moral and professional character has been truly respectable."

FRANCIS MURROW, A. M.
Lime-st. Academy.
LEWIS LYNE,
St. James-st. Academy.

Liverpool, April 23, 1822.

"*Great George Place Academy, Liverpool, April 26th*, 1822.

Dear Sir,

Understanding that you have it in contemplation to leave Liverpool, I embrace this opportunity of stating to you my fervent wishes for your future health and prosperity; and also how perfectly I was satisfied with your Conduct and Abilities, when I employed you in your professional capacity.—It will always afford me pleasure to hear of your welfare—and I hope you will be fortunate enough to obtain a station where your Abilities will be brought into action: in which case, I feel convinced you will do yourself great Credit.

With the greatest Respect,
I am, Dear Sir,
Your Obed't Serv't,
LAWRENCE FROST."

Rev. John S. Thompson.

Leaving Liverpool, I visited the North of Ireland, but it seemed to have lost all its former charms: all those fascinating endearments, which once afforded delight to my youthful hours! Ah! seldom will the place of birth answer the expectations of him that returns, after a long absence, hoping to recal past sensations which have fled forever. Reflecting on the seasons that were gone, and viewing the scenery, which could charm no more, I recollected the appropriate lines of Thomson:

——— Ah! whither now are fled
Those dreams of greatness? Those unsolid hopes
Of happiness! Those longings after fame?
Those restless cares? Those busy bustling days?
Those gay-spent festive nights? Those veering thoughts?
Lost between good and ill, that shar'd thy life?
All now are vanished! Virtue sole survives,
Immmortal, never-failing friend of man,
His guide to happiness.———

Having bid adieu to my friends in the north, I returned to Belfast, and spent a short time with my respected friend, James Thompson, A. M. Professor of Mathematics in the Academical Institution. Here, I received proof that Ireland was not in a state of preparation for receiving the instructions of a liberal and rational religion. A gentleman from the University of Halle had advertised to deliver a course of Lectures, on the Mistranslations of the English Bible; and for no other offence, was seized by the Mayor and cast into prison, no doubt, in his Excellency's opinion, to suffer for the crime of blasphemy. But the truly patriotic editor of the Irishman, and a few other gentlemen of distinction, presented a petition to the Lord Lieutenant, and had him removed from the fanatics of Belfast, by a habeas corpus, to Dublin, where he was soon acquitted; and as soon as dismissed, he returned by mail with all haste to Belfast, and commenced his course of Lectures, with double the audience he could otherwise have obtained. He spoke the Hebrew and Arabic, with all the facility of his native German; Lectured from a Polyglot Bible; and read and translated the Syriac, Chaldee, Greek, and Latin, with amazing ease and familiarity. I attended a few of the Lectures, and was perfectly satisfied with the evidence he adduced to maintain his allegations against the English Translators. He certainly succeeded to expose the impropriety of applying Isaiah 9. 6, and Jer. 23. 6, and several similar passages, as prophecies of Christ; and read Isaiah 9. 6, the Mighty God shall call him, &c. I would have been pleased to have heard the whole course, but could not delay; having taken passage in the ship Edward Downes, of Belfast, Captain Russel, bound for St. Andrews, New Brunswick.

On the evening of May 27, 1822, the signal guns were fired, and our ship moved down the bay, having about 300 emigrants on board. The next morning, immediately after breakfast, we

gave our sails to the wind, and left our native shores, our country, and friends, never again to be viewed by a vast majority of the passengers! Here I cannot forbear inserting the following lines:—

There is a land, of every land the pride,
Belov'd by Heaven, o'er all the world beside;
Where brighter suns dispense serener light,
And milder moons imparadise the night;
A land of beauty, virtue, valor, truth,
Time-tutor'd age, and love-exalted youth;
The wandering mariner whose eye explores
The wealthiest isles, the most enchanting shores,
Views not a realm so beautiful and fair,
Nor breathes the spirit of a purer air.
In every clime the magnet of his soul,
Touch'd by remembrance, trembles to that pole;
For in this land of Heaven's peculiar grace,
The heritage of Nature's noblest race,
There is a spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer sweeter spot than all the rest.
Where man, creation's tyrant, casts aside
His sword and sceptre, pageantry and pride,
While in his soften'd looks benignly blend
The sire, the son, the husband, father, friend:
Here woman reigns; the mother, daughter, wife,
Strews with fresh flowers the narrow way of life;
In the clear heaven of her delighted eye,
An angel guard of love and graces lie;
Around her knees domestic duties meet,
And fire-side pleasures gambol at her feet.
Where shall this land this spot of earth be found?
Art thou a man? a patriot? look around:
O, thou shalt find, howe'er thy footsteps roam,
That land thy country, and that spot thy home!

When opposite the Castle of Carrickfergus, we fired a salute of six guns and gave as many cheers: but as the opinion was, no doubt, that we were *liberty-men*, rejoicing in the prospect of soon attaining a better country, we received no other answer than that of sullen silence. Owing to the direction of the winds, we were forced to take a northern course; and in the beginning of the first night at sea, a brisk gale arose from the south, which caused the ship to heave on the proud billows, and produced many unpleasant sensations in the passengers. On the next morning a strong wind blew from the south-west. The heavens were robed in dismal gloom; and our vessel began to ship seas, which ran several feet high over our decks. Great God! how awful are the wonders of the deep to the minds of those, who are thus assailed, by the menacing surges, on the commencement of a first voyage! The language of Virgil,* Horace,† and the Psalmist,‡ alternately occurred to my mind.

*Æneid 1. l. 84—96. †Ode third. ‡Ps. 107. 23—28.

The raging winds, with mixed confusion roar,
And roll the foaming billows to the shore.
The cables crack, the sailors' fearful cries
Ascend; and sable night involves the skies;
And heaven itself is ravish'd from our eyes.
Loud peals of thunder from the poles ensue;
Then flashing fires the transient light renew;
The face of things a frightful image bears;
And present death in various forms appears.
Then "thrice and four times happy those" we cried,
"That on their native lands, before their parents died!"
Dryden.

Or oak, or brass, with tripple fold,
Around that daring mortal's bosom roll'd,
Who first to the wild ocean's rage
Launch'd the frail bark, and heard the winds engage.
What various forms of death could fright
The man, who viewed with fixed, unshaken sight,
The floating monsters, waves inflam'd,
And rocks for shipwreck'd fleets, ill-fam'd?
No laws, or human or divine,
Can the presumptuous race of man confine.——*Francis.*

Who on the ruthless waves in ships descend,
And with the fragile keel the billows rend;
The works of God behold, in dread surprise,
When storms rush forth, and heaving surges rise.
Aloft to Heaven, the briny swell extends,
Then towards the dark abyss, it downward tends.
Their melting souls confus'd, assail the skies,
And rend the Heavens, with vows and hopeless cries.
Indulgent mercy, always prompt to save,
Rebukes the tempest, calms the raging wave.
The haven desired, they greet with loud acclaim,
And Pæans raise to God the Maker's name.

For three days I neither eat nor drank, but lay with awful bodings, expecting a watery grave, and indeed so extreme was my sickness, that death seemed to lose its unfriendly aspect. I could not understand, at that time, how it happened, that I felt no sensation of hunger; but on reflecting on the subject, discovered that frequent vomitings, by clearing the stomach of the gastric juice; will defer the sensation of hunger, and protract, for several days, the termination of life. Of this fact, all men should be fully apprised, seeing in time of shipwreck, or other similar seasons of restriction, life might be preserved till relief could be obtained. During three weeks, I was incessantly sick; and was therefore reduced almost to a skeleton. The Captain and Mate were very humane and attentive, but the number of the sick soon became so great, as to preclude particular attention.

Now fell to the dust all my late resolutions about preaching. I saw myself placed in a most important station. On the vast deep with 300 souls, at the mercy of the winds and waves, and

exposed to imminent danger, unseen, but not the less probable. A great part of the emigrants were without the form, and very few enjoyed the power of Godliness. I beheld myself as David, in the wilderness of Judea, and my soul like his, longed to appear before God, in the assemblies of his people. O seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, often enjoyed in the ordinances of his house, and in the congregations, which are called by his name, how precious do ye seem, when no longer in the reach of enjoyment! O that men would duly estimate the privileges of the Christian Church, and show their sensibility of Divine favor, whilst these precious opportunities are accessible, and they capable of improving them to lasting advantage.

Though very unable to speak, yet feeling a return of all my first enthusiasm for the instruction of mankind in righteousness, I sat on a bed and delivered a discourse to about one hundred people, in the second cabin, on the evening of the first sabbath, after we sailed from Belfast. My subject was, "I have a message from God unto thee."* O how happy I was to expostulate with the people on that occasion; not knowing but it might be the last opportunity for me to speak or them to hear. At the close of the service I told them, if my life should be spared, and the Captain approve, I would preach every Sabbath, during the voyage.

The Captain issued an ordinance on the following Sabbath morning, and like a true son of the church, annexed a penalty, which was, that "all passengers capable of attending, and all the crew who were not actually engaged in the management of the vessel, should wash and change clothes at the first bell, or nine in the morning, and attend service at the second bell, or ten o'clock; and whoever would neglect should be deprived of his allowance of water until the following Tuesday." The decks were all regularly washed on Saturday evening, and every preparation made for the Sabbath; and no pains spared in providing every convenience for worship. Hence I had a congregation of about 250 persons every Sabbath; a majority of whom heard the word gladly.

No attempt was made by me to promote sectarian views. O no! we were all separated from home and from acquaintances; former prejudice and party spirit were no more. On the vast expanse of water, surrounded by nothing but the blue ethereal sky, we raised our fellowship to communion with the inhabitants of the celestial world, and felt as if our absence from our country, kindred, and fellow-men, made access to heaven more easy, and placed us nearer the eternal throne. Sweet hours, in the midst of danger and death, with bodies emaciated by disease † and sickness, the world and all its cares fled, as if from the presence of the new Heavens, which seemed to come down to us, whilst we

*Judges 3. 20. † The dysentery predominated among the passengers during a great part of the voyage.

held communion with the Father and the Son! I felt as if I could bless God, that I had lived to those days: and renewed my vows to serve him in the sacred office to which, I thought I had received a renewal of my commission.

On the 28th of June we descried the coast of Nova Scotia. This was like a Pisga view of the promised land, and was a time of rejoicing to all. But alas, how true it is, that in the midst of life we are in death. On the evening of Sabbath the 30th of June, two days after our hearts had been cheered, by a prospect of a speedy termination of our imprisonment, being envelloped in thick fog, and our ship running at the rate of eight miles an hour, we struck on a rock on the coast of Hope Island. O heavens! shall I ever forget the awfulness of that hour! In the midst of darkness, we could not see the object against which we struck, and waiting in awful suspense, worse than death itself, every moment for the descent of our vessel, or her falling into pieces. All hands, except the mate and ship carpenter, were so terror struck as to pay no attention to the commands of the Captain. Having stood about two minutes in desperate consternation, I began to supplicate heaven on behalf of the numerous lives on board. The expostulations of Abraham for Sodom, came into view, and the reasons assigned by Jehovah for sparing the Ninevites. I cried to God, to be intreated on our behalf. I then reflected on my ministry. Eternal God, cried I, for what end have I come hither? Hast thou not a message for me to bear to the people of America! That moment my faith seemed as if it could remove mountains: I leaped on the quarter deck, and exclaimed, Jehovah I am thine. I am destined to preach thy great Salvation to the inhabitants of the New World. I shall be carried to them. The waves cannot drown me!

The greater part of the passengers, had got on the deck. Those who could swim were preparing to leap off. I ran to the prow, and looking over, saw nothing but craggy rocks. I then ran to the Captain, crying, Captain, forget your vessel, and save your passengers! He replied, I will; the boats shall be ready in two minutes. The long boat was heaved aside the vessel: all who could swim were ordered to remain on deck, and not to quit the vessel till she foundered. But the shore being so unfavorable for landing, the sea so rough, the danger of the boat swamping, or being broken on the rocks; and the thoughts of parting husband and children, made the prospect to the women as cruel as death. An officer on board, kept up a constant firing of minute guns, and caused a wet sponge to be put into the caliber before the match was applied, to increase the report: but no person came to our assistance!

Finding that the stern of the vessel was moving, and that the waters had not become unmanageably deep in the hold, an anchor was taken astern, some distance, and fastened; and about sixty

men pulling the cable, the ship moved astern and parted with the rock. O how alert was every ear, to hear the man who sounded, announce every minute, the depth of the water in the hold! As the vessel seemed to bear up, and the pumps to take away the water nearly as fast as it entered, courage was resumed: and every one that could do ought, seemed perfectly willing to assist. Thus, the Lord in mercy, saved us from a watery grave!

The ship, Edward Downes, was almost entirely new, built of the best materials, and burden 500 tons. She was considered the boast and honor of Ireland. No blame was attached to the Captain, who, in every sense of the word, was a gentleman: but masters of vessels cannot be too careful on the coast of Halifax, and especially in the Bay of Fundy: where the tide drifts a ship at the rate of four or five miles an hour. Thus, whilst we expected to weather the Island, at least one or two miles, we struck it right in the centre. Conscious of the high standing of the Captain, not only in the opinion of his passengers, but of his country in general, I talked with some persons on the propriety of our bearing testimony to his conduct. We immediately contributed about one hundred dollars, drew up and signed a certificate, got an elegant gold medal struck, which I presented, and he received, with tears of mutual gratitude. It bears the following inscription:

"*Presented, by his passengers, to Captain RUSSEL, Commander of the EDWARD DOWNES, as a token of their gratitude and high esteem, for his humanity and professional abilities, manifested during the voyage to America, in the Spring of* 1822."

On my arrival at East Port, Maine, I preached in the Baptist church, and after remaining a few days, sailed for Philadelphia. This destination appeared to be as of constraint, for I had always fixed on Boston, as the place where I should spend some time, on my arrival in the New World. To this part of America, I was advised by Rev. Dr. Bruce of Belfast, and my esteemed friend Professor Thompson, and others, who considered the Bostonians as the most literary and philosophical citizens of all the Republic. We landed at Philadelphia, on the first of August. I was extremely disappointed on viewing the city. I had heard much of it, but on seeing a mass of plain, common, unadorned brick buildings, I could not but suppose, that all the descriptions which I had read or heard, were taken from imagination and not from real scenery. It will be readily admitted, that the city is very regularly laid out, and the streets kept agreeably clean; but when this is said, all the truth is nearly exhausted. To the man of taste there is little attraction at Philadelphia, and to social feelings there is almost one uniform repulse.

On Sabbath, being the third of August, I preached to a large congregation in George church and on the following Sabbath in the Ebenezer, which are the largest and best attended churches

amongst the Methodists in Philadelphia, and perhaps in the Union. I continued to preach in the different chapels, occasionally, for some time, especially in the two above named, and sometimes in Nazareth, Salem, and John's church. Connected with George church, are some very respectable families and preachers, by whom I was kindly and effectionately received; and for their good will and kind favors, I trust I feel thankful. But several of them who received me with warmth at first, on a change of name and party, proved themselves devoid of every principle, whether moral, religious, or polite. Indeed, I was by no means surprised by such conduct, having long witnessed similar proceedings, among a class of men, in whom a mean education was combined with fanaticism in religion.

Shortly after my arrival at Philadelphia, I was solicited to join an association whose object was, professedly, to put down the Universalists, whom the members of said association represented, as a set of wicked and infamous men! On inquiry concerning them, I was informed, *they believed that men died like cattle, and ceased to be forever!* I replied, "that cannot be, for all Universalists agree, that mankind shall be universally saved." But it was again replied, that "*they did not believe in the soul of man, and therefore, the death of the body was the termination of his existence.* On farther and more particular inquiry, I learned that the Universalists of Philadelphia, disbelieved *future punishment*; and this fact had given origin to the above false representation. However, I then seriously believed it my duty to join the Association, which consisted of persons of all denominations, believing in endless misery, united in one common mass to overthrow the supposed pernicious errors of Universalism! The Association was constituted under the name of the "Theological Society of Philadelphia," and chiefly consisted of Methodist Preachers, Class Leaders, &c. I was elected Chairman, but afterwards, for the convenience of occupying a more active station in the arena of combat, I resigned the office of Chairman and was choson Secretary.

The Theological Society met every, Thursday evening, in the Hall of the Northern Liberties, and the Berean Society, on every Tuesday evening in the same place. On entering the Hall, for the first time, Dr. Burden, then Chairman of the Berean Society, was reading the subject for discussion, namely, "The doctrine of Atonement;" which, he stated, had been under consideration at a previous meeting. I inquired if by *atonement*, was implied the doctrine of *substitution*, and was answered in the affirmative. This doctrine I then cordially believed, and felt disposed to defend, in the most strenuous and zealous manner.

I remember, when in conversation with the learned Dr, Bruce, before I left Belfast, I had spoken freely on this subject. I had mentioned the phrase, *eternal Son*, at which he smiled, saying:

can you form any idea of eternal Father, when you apply the same appellation to his Son: I answered yes; nor do I see any thing ridiculous in the application. We may call the Sun the Parent of light, but you cannot suppose a Sun without light. If then you can suppose light to be emitted from the Sun, the first moment of his existence, with equal propriety, may we suppose the Son to exist in the first moment of his Divine Father. If then we may call God eternal, we may, with nearly equal propriety, call his Son eternal, for you cannot conceive of a period, in which he existed, without the capability of acting in that supposed period. Then, Sir, said he, you can suppose the doctrine of Substitution also? I can, Sir, said I, and philosophically too! for when I look at some little insects and consider their insignificance, I can conceive of a man, worth a world of such insects, and ascending the scale of existence upwards from man to God. I can suppose there may be other beings as far above man, as man above an insect; consequently equal in value to a world of mankind. Well, said he, if you can conceive of the subject in such way as will not dishonor God, I am submissive.

I therefore maintained the doctrine of vicarious sufferings, for several evenings, at least with doubtful victory on either side. But during the process of the controversy between the Berean and Theological Societies, frequent appeals were made to me, as an honest and classical man, in relation to different opinions concerning the propriety of the English translation of certain passages, in the New Testament; and also concerning the import of certain terms, the meaning of which, might effect the arguments used in the debate. As I never remember being able to deny what I believed, I made acknowledgements that were deemed injurious to the doctrines, which I then maintained: but in fact I maintained no doctrine, which I did not believe. However, the Universalists on the one hand, and Methodists on the other, began to collect evidence, which they thought amounted to proof, that I believed the doctrine of the *Restitution of all things* This produced satisfaction on the one hand, but chagrin and disgust on the other. Indeed, at the commencement of the controversy, I pledged my word, that I should either triumph by fair means, or fall a victim in the contest: and if any man, of whatever country or abilities, enter the controversy with Universalism, on the same principle by which I was governed, the result will be the same!

Suspicions of my orthodoxy, now began to operate powerfully among the Methodists: and as they are the most forward people on earth to all manner of talkativeness, one more full of zeal than knowledge, reported to the Superintendent of George's charge, that I had denied the Deity of Jesus and admitted Universalism. In a few days after, I was informed by a certain man, that I should be brought to trial for preaching false doctrines, and that he should be one of the witnesses. I then thought it expedient to

make a full confession of facts, and withdraw in order to avoid unpleasant feelings, both to myself and friends. I therefore addressed the following note to the Rev. Mr. Thatcher.

Sir,—As suspicion operates so powerfully against me, I think it my duty to withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church. I confess I am a confirmed Arian, and a believer in the restitution of all things: and as I am persuaded that all efforts to reclaim me, would be ineffectual; I bid you adieu; wishing you and all my former friends, the enjoyment of every blessing in time and eternity.

J. S. THOMPSON.

Philadelphia, November 6, 1822.

Since the day I wrote the above note, which surely was not calculated to give great offence, the conduct of the Methodists towards me, has been such as would disgrace any system of Paganism! No law, human or divine, no decency nor tie of humanity, has afforded any boundary to their malice, nor restriction to their persecution. Nor has any manly principle inspired their souls, to rise higher than the mire of slander, and stratagem of falsehood. So be it. By such means, they will more effectually teach mankind, the barrenness of their souls, and the rottenness of their pretensions, than by any other METHOD to which the could possibly resort.

At the next meeting of the Society, after the date of the above note, it was read by the chairman, and produced a considerable commotion. One cried, "Thank God!" a second "Hang him!" a third, "Judas!" and to riot they went, right frantically, as if they had thought themselves in the midst of a grand *revival*, or *camp-meeting!* The scene of that evening was worthy the *origin* and *end* of a Society, composed of such materials, and got up for such a purpose! The following facetious piece appeared shortly after, in the "Philadelphia Universalist Magazine."

SUICIDE.

An incident of late occurrence in this city tends much to strengthen the idea, that suicide is never committed unless in a state of mental insanity. A sensibility too much excited throws a gloom over the most delightful prospects of life, and when combined with *mania superstitiosa* will frequently terminate existence. The melancholy instance under notice, was a being of strange compound, with clothing of divers colors, and unseemly make: he was a church-yard compost, surrounded with fog, he fought ideal windmills, and smiled on his Quixotic conquests: his mental abberrations passed for spiritual influx, and his groans and shouts as landmarks of inspiration—but alas there arose a sad reality, to

which opposition was strength, and combat, victory—He fought with enthusiasm until his ramparts were levelled, and the flag in the hands of his foe; when, sad to relate, he turned his arms against himself and snapped the silver chord of life with his own hands. —Ye pious! drop the tear—*The Methodist Theological Society is no more!!!* Noisy, though not destructive, it rose boisterous as the western wind, till its sound was hushed forever on the waters of truth.—Like the grave-diggers in Hamlet, the wise argued its right to Christian burial, and in the midst of confusion it was jerked into its grave. Persecution was its last sermon, and the amen of its prayer was riot—The wicked stood in silence, spectators of the *ludicro comico-non-religiosa* scene; and then was brought to pass the saying that is written: "*Let the dead bury their dead.*" O Bereans, be generous even to your enemies, and let the Hall of your assemblies be hung in black for poor Theological: yea invite his relatives to mourn with you, the sudden downfall of *felo de se.*"

Reflecting on my own lot, which I have sometimes regarded as unfortunate, I received some consolation from the thought, that my case was by no means singular; and that reproach and slander have in no age been sure indications of guilt. The following lines, on Calumny, being appropriate, are therefore inserted:

Ah, what avails the shield of truth,
The charm of virtue, beauty, youth,
Against that fiend, unform'd, uncouth,
Whose wounds no lenient balm can close?
Assail'd by slander's venom'd tooth,
The sensate mind must droop, forsooth,
And wither like a canker'd rose.
Yes, they who ever felt the pang
Of Calumny's inveterate fang,
Must own that minstrel never sang
Of deeper, dreader, deadlier foes.

But what, alas, avails complaint?
Be man more holy than a saint,
He envy's fiend enrag'd must see.
Be lovely woman "chaste as snow
And pure as ice," she still must know
The keenest pang of human wo,
The rankling wound of Calumny

But hear a Saviour's accents mild,
"The persecuted and reviled
Are blessed"—saith the Lord.
Then still, in conscious virtue clad,
"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad,
"For great is your reward."

As my connexion with the Methodists was now dissolved, never again to be renewed, in the present mode of existence, it can-

not be improper to subjoin the following brief *review* of a system, which for a season I admired, but which, at every calm period of my life, I disapproved. A system, that can only live so long as the mind is held in vassalage, by the influence of bodily passions. But lest it might be supposed, that I speak from prejudice, I shall principally use the words of Southey: and though my own observation could supply sufficient matter for a volume, yet the remarks shall be confined to three or four pages.

That Wesley was *ambitious*, none can deny. His power from the first was absolute and despotic. When asked in one of the Conferences, what power he exercised over all the Methodists of Great Britain and Ireland, he replied, in relation to classes: "A power to appoint when, where, and how they should meet: and this power remained the same whether the people meeting were 12, 1200, or 12,000"—In relation to stewards: "*I myself*, not the people, chose the stewards, and appointed each the distinct work wherein he was to help me as long as *I* chose."—In relation to preachers: "A power to appoint when, where, and how, they shall help *me*—and to tell any, if *I* saw cause, *I* do not desire your help any longer."—In relation to the Conferences; "They did not desire the meeting, but *I* did; neither did *I* at any time divest *myself* of *any part* of that power which the Providence of God had cast upon me."* More pedantic and despotic language than this, under the garb of mock humility, cannot be produced from any history, either ecclesiastical or profane!

That Wesley was *inconsistent* and *hypocritical* is equally manifest from a variety of circumstances. Whilst he had no hopes of obtaining a title to Episcopacy, he maintained that Presbyter and Bishop were synonymous: but when Erasmus, the professed Bishop of Arcadia, appeared in London, Wesley was very desirous of being Episcopized on that occasion; though he failed to attain the object of his ambition, in respect to titles of honor. Notwithstanding, he was too crafty for Coke; for from reading Lord King's account of the Primitive Church, Wesley persuaded both himself and Coke, that being a Presbyter, he was also a Bishop, and had the right to ordain Coke a Bishop, which he felt moved to do at Bristol; without it occurring to Coke, that he being also a Presbyter, was as good a Bishop as Wesley, and had as good authority to ordain Wesley. But probably, Coke was as desirous of the humble title as Wesley, and was as little concerned as he, about the validity, provided he enjoyed the name and authority. †

As soon as Coke felt his new honors to *come blushing thick upon him*, he began to partake of the same spirit that dwelt in Wesley: hence, he arrogated the same authority over Scotland, as had been foolishly assumed over America. Thus, these meek, hum-

* See Southey's Life of Wesley, vol. 2. p. 146. † See Life of Wesley, vol. 2. p. 316—319.

ble souls, who were always reaching humility to their hearers, were well aware, that the more humble their submissive followers the more easy to hold them in vassalage: and never did the most absolute despot of Rome, hold the credulous and implicit believers of his spiritual supremacy, in more abject slavery, than the *self-consecrated fathers* of Methodism, the delirious admirers of their celestial delegation!

The progress of Methodism was much assisted by the hypocritical pretentions of its propagators, who always professed to be true sons of the Church, whilst they were actually sapping its foundation! "We are all Churchmen, we will always remain so; only let us be more holy!" This was their continual cry: a very plausible pretence and alluring bait, which hooked many thousands unawares; for the converts have generally been from the unthinking class; whereas, among the Scotch, who are a deliberate people, very few proselytes were ever obtained.

Methodism is the *advocate of ignorance;* and *disseminates disaffection to literary pursuits.* Before Wesley commenced his career, he wrote a letter from Oxford to his mother, in which he says, "shall I quite break off my pursuit of all learning, but what immediately tends to practice? I once desired to make a fair show in languages and philosophy; but it is past: there is a more excellent way." And on his voyage to America, he wrote to his brother Charles to "banish from his school all such poison as the classics." On relating these things, Southey very justly remarks: "Fanaticism always comes to this in its progress; first it depreciates learning, then it would destroy it. There have been Christians, as they believed themselves, who would have burned the Alexandrian Library, upon the same logic as the Caliph Omar.*

The disciples of Wesley have received with due meekness, the precepts of their master in this respect, as the following instance out of an hundred may show. In 1813, when Methodism had attained its apex of popularity, and when, in consequence of Lord Sidney's bill, it became necessary for preachers to have licences, out of thirty-six persons who obtained licences at one time, six spelled "Ministers of the Gospel" in six different ways: seven signed their mark: and one, on being asked if he could read, replied, "Mother reads, and I 'spounds and 'splains."†

In 1821, I was present in Mount Pleasant Chapel, Liverpool, when a Mr. Francis, one of their most respectable preachers, who had excited the disgust of the Methodist populace, because he usually addressed their understanding, and made but few appeals to their passions, closed his farewell sermon to a large congregation in the following manner: "I have laboured among you for two years. They have been productive of painful feelings, but I have disburdened my soul. During my services among you, I have often called upon you to exercise your understandings in the service of

*Life of Wesley, vol. 1, p. p. 78, 92. †Life of Wesley, vol. 2, p. 388.

God, but I now leave you to sing to the praise and glory of *ignorance*, while you live!"

"The tendency to produce mock humility and spiritual pride, is one of the evil effects of Methodism. It is chargeable also with leading to bigotry, illiberal manners, confined knowledge, and uncharitable superstition. In its insolent language, all unawakened persons, that is to say, all except themselves, or such graduated professors in other evangelical sects as they are pleased to admit *ad eundem*, are contemptuously styled unbelievers. In proportion as Methodism obtained ground among the educated classes, its direct effects were evil. It narrowed their views and feelings; burdened them with forms; discouraged accomplishments that gave a grace to life; substituted a sectarian instead of a Catholic spirit; carrying disunion and discord into private life, breaking up families and friendships. The sooner you have weaned your affections from those who, not being awakened, were, of course, in the way to perdition—the sooner the sheep withdrew from the goats, the better. Upon this head, the monks were not more remorseless than the Methodists. They take all other Christians to be heathens. These are those great pretenders to the spirit, into whose party does the vilest person living no sooner adscribe himself, than he is, *ipso facto*, dubbed a saint, hallowed and dear to God.—These are the confidents who can design the minute, the place and the means of their conversion:—a schism full of spiritual disdain and high imposture, if any such there be on earth."*

As to the disorder common among Methodists, especially in revivals, it can be easily accounted for on natural principles. When Wesley made his first tour into Wales, he says the most of the inhabitants were as utterly ignorant of the gospel as any Cherokee Indian. After preaching was over, any one who pleased gave out a verse of a hymn, and this they sang over and over again, with all their might and main, thirty or forty times, till some of them wrought themselves into a sort of drunkenness or madness. They were then violently agitated, and leaped up and down in all manner of postures, frequently for hours together. "I think," says Wesley, "there needs no great penetration to understand this—they have little experience, either of the ways of God or the devices of Satan; so he serves himself by their simplicity, in order to wear them out, and to bring a discredit on the work of God."—This was the beginning of the Jumpers. "At seven in the morning," says Whitefield,† "have I seen, perhaps, ten thousand, in the midst of a sermon, crying *Goguniant bendyitti*, ready to leap for joy.‡"

* Southey, vol. 2, 376—8. † A man who attended one of these meetings, but could not get within hearing of Whitefield's voice, telling how blessed he was under the sermon, was asked how he could be blessed, when he did not hear a single word. "Ah," said he, "I saw his blessed white wig." ‡ Southey, vol. 2, p. p. 164—5.

"A powerful doctrine," says Southey, "preached with passionate sincerity, with fervid zeal, and vehement eloquence, produced a powerful effect upon weak minds, ardent feelings, and disordered fancies. There are passions which are as infectious as the plague, and fear itself is not more so than fanaticism. When once these bodily affections were declared to be the work of grace, the process of regeneration, the throes of the new birth, a free licence was proclaimed for every kind of extravagance. And when the preacher encouraged his auditors to throw off all restraint, and abandon themselves before the congregation to these mixed sensations of mind and body, the consequences were what might be anticipated. Sometimes Wesley scarcely began to speak, before some of his believers, overwrought with expectation, fell into the *crisis*, for so it may be called in Methodism, as properly as in animal magnetism. Sometimes his voice could scarcely be heard amid the groans and cries of the suffering and raving enthusiasts; and it was not long before men, women, and children, began to act the *demoniac* as well as the *convert*."*

The following extract exhibits a fair picture of Methodism in a thunder-storm. "I was preaching on forgiveness," says a Mr. Cennick. "It was pitch dark; large flashes of lightning and loud claps of thunder, mixed with screams of frightened persons caused thereby, the place seemed to resemble the habitation of apostate spirits. One cried, 'that fearful thunder is raised by the Devil!' Another, 'the Devil will have me! I am damned!' a third, 'ten thousand Devils, millions of Devils are about me!' This continued three hours. O what a *power* reigned amongst us!!!"†

As a general summary, Methodism has had its good effects, partly on the ruder orders of society; and partly, in exciting others of more solid and efficient energies to greater activity. But were all the good and ill it has done in the world put in scales, it would not be easy to determine which would preponderate. Its tendency is manifestly to barbarism. It degrades the manners, stupifies the mind, and drowns the intellect in gloomy superstition! Its financial system out generals that of the Church of Rome in the days of Luther; and is the most oppressive that ever disgraced Christianity. Oft have I known its subjects beg from the parish to put in the Methodist box, and wives defraud their husbands for the same purpose. The sale of tickets is the sale of indulgences and passports, under a new name: and the whole system, calculated to enervate the order of society, the energies of intellect, the progress of science, and the happiness of mankind!

When at Edinburgh, I often heard the story of the tailor and his wife, in relation to Mr. W. which being a sample of many similar proceedings, I shall here relate. This woman, who was a great admirer of Methodism, had got converted, and doubted whether it were lawful for her to remain any longer with her hus-

* Southey, vol. 1, p. 220. † Southey, vol. 1, p. 404.

band, (he being *unconverted* and an *unbeliever.*) He, on his part, had often suspected *fraudulent* dealings for *pious* purposes. One day whilst his wife was preparing for attendance on W's. preaching, he observed with great care, and endeavored to call her attention from her room into another part of the house, on some business. Going immediately to her bureau, he saw a folded paper, and on opening it, found three pieces of gold, which he exchanged for three Scotch pennies, leaving the paper folded as before. The woman hastening to meeting, carried the paper without examination, and after service, put it into Mr. W's. hand, who, on her departure, opened the paper, and beholding its contents, sent after the woman. On her return, he asked if she intended to insult him, by giving him three pence, rolled in a paper. She affirmed she gave him three half guineas. He denied, she affirmed, till both became somewhat choleric. 'Ah!' said the woman, 'my husband has often told me you were a *fox*, and now I believe him.' She abandoned Methodism, and lived, ever after, agreeably with her husband.

If any ask, is not the description you have given of Methodism tinctured with prejudice? I answer, I believe not. If it be again demanded, does the above description include all Methodists? I answer no; for there is no general rule without exceptions. But when we describe a country, we do not draw the picture of its national character from its nobility and its literati; for this would be as incorrect, as to represent all Israel the worshippers of the true God in the days of Elijah, because there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. The general character of a country or sect is its true character, by which it ought ever to be represented. Should, however, Methodism emancipate itself from former follies, and ever attain to *mens sana in corpore sano*, it will then be no longer liable to former objections. Nor should it be supposed that many good men of decent education, who have patronized Methodism, are subject to its infectious or contagious influence; but as far as they have drunk into its spirit, their character has become more or less depreciated. May God in mercy deliver mankind from fanaticism: for there can be no thought too wicked, no action too base, for the frantic enthusiast!

This account of false religion, may induce some to imagine the writer unfavorable to true religion: but blessed be God, it is not so. From *ligo*, *to tie or bind*, is derived *religo*, to *rebind*, or place under a more powerful restraint; and hence the English word *religion*, which is that moral obligation under which the Divine benevolence has placed the whole human offspring. From the Divine goodness to us and the desire of our own happiness, result reciprocal good will and beneficence among mankind. With this view of the subject, it is easy to perceive the force and propriety of the doctrine taught by Jesus and Paul, namely: "love is the fulfilling of the law." Love to God for his goodness, love to one

another, which causes us to abound in every good word and work: for, saith Paul, "*love worketh no ill.*" "Is gratitude," said Lord Chatham, "in the number of a man's virtues? If it is, the highest benefactor demands the warmest returns of gratitude, love and praise; *ingratum qui dixerit omnia dixit.* If a man want this virtue, where there are infinite obligations to excite and quicken it, he will be likely to want all others towards his fellow creatures, whose utmost gifts are poor, compared with those which he daily receives at the hands of his never-failing, Almighty friend. *Cherish true religion* as preciously, as you will *fly*, with abhorrence and contempt, *superstition and enthusiasm.* The *first* is the perfection and glory of the human nature: the *two last*, its depravation and disgrace."

Whoever would be religious, must *learn to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.** *Do justly*, by the exercise of that impartial equity to all men which we would that they should manifest unto us; never approving of fraud or deception in ourselves, which we disapprove in others. *Loving mercy*, by the prompt and cheerful performance of every kind, benevolent and charitable action to which we may be called by the ties of consanguinity, or by the mistakes and misfortunes of others: in all cases exercising pity and forgiveness towards all men, in all situations; and judging of the nature and extent of that mercy and forbearance which we owe to them, by placing ourselves in their circumstances, and suffering ourselves to be governed by the influence of sympathy, and the example of our blessed Master. *Walking humbly with God*, by remembering our infinite obligations to him, our continual dependence on his providence, our unworthiness and rebellion; and by manifesting our sense of his favor and our dependance, by thankful praise and humble prayer; never repining at any occurrence of providence, knowing that all events are under the guidance of unerring wisdom and parental care.

Here a small digression may be admissible, relative to concerns of a domestic nature. On August 10, 1822, being the second Sabbath after my arrival at Philadelphia, on my way to preach at Kensington, I was introduced to the family of the late *Ross Thomson*, Attorney at Law, then residing in the Northern Liberties; and as they were of Irish extraction, I had reason to believe them a branch of my own family. Hence an intimate friendship was soon formed, which shortly after resulted in a still more intimate alliance. On the *twelfth day* of the following October, I was married, by the Rev. Henry King, to Emeline Maria Vesie Thomson, the *amiable* daughter of said *Ross Thomson*, then aged nineteen years. Of her was born to me, in the vicinity of Rochester, N. Y. March 6, 1824, *Elizabeth Mary Thompson*, so called from Elizabeth, the name of my mother and fourth sister; and *Mary*,†

* Micah, 6, 8. † The reader is requested to correct the mistake in page 9th line 16th, and instead of "Mary," read "Elizabeth."

the name of my second sister, and also the name of the mother of Emeline Maria Vesie. Unto *us* was also born in Philadelphia, January 16, 1826, *John Samuel Ross Thompson*. These constitute the present number of my family, whom I commend to the protection and favor of Heaven; earnestly praying they may be blessed, and rendered, by the kind providence of God, both *useful* and *ornamental* to society.

Believing I might serve the cause of truth more effectually in some other district than at Philadelphia, I resolved to leave that city. In the beginning of 1823, I had published a pamphlet entitled "Unitarianism the religion of Jesus," which seemed to augment my crime, and increase the popular prejudice. On the evening before my departure, the Second Universalist Society, for whom I had preached some time, presented the following testimonial.

The official members of the Second Universalist Society in Philadelphia, certify that the Rev. John Samuel Thompson has conducted himself with propriety, since he came to this city. After he became a Universalist, his former friends, who seem to have become his enemies, merely on account of his change of setiments, made several efforts to injure his character, and prevent his usefulness as a minister; but his moral conduct always appeared to us correct and regular; and his ministry here has been acceptable, and respectfully attended.

Attest, JOHN CRAVEN, *Sec'y.*

Philadelphia, March 4, 1823.

Having arrived at New-York, I was agreeably struck with the contrast. The appearance of the city, the extent of business, and the open and friendly address of the inhabitants, induce the foreigner to think he has again crossed the Atlantic, and entered on a different nation from that which he had contemplated at Philadelphia. After a few day's delay at this city, I visited New-Haven, where I preached several times in the State House, and had a rencounter with the *obedientes ventri* of Yale-College, who appeared as ill adapted to manage a Theological thesis, as their dogmatical professor. Alas! what time is lost in the seminaries, in straining at gnats and swallowing camels. Whilst the student often thinks himself fully qualified for that office to which he aspires, he sometimes feels, to his great dissatisfaction, that he has been spending his strength for nought and laboring in vain.

Returning to New-York, I made a tour to the West, as far as Buffalo, preaching the Gospel in most of the villages, which seemed to them as a first message. Scarcely any place west of New-Hartford, had ever heard the doctrine of grace. Salvation by works or purgatorial purification, appeared to constitute the perfection of their knowledge in the Gospel. The professors of Universalism, in general, stood upon the same foundation on which

I rested when I left Europe. But believing I had greatly profited by the discussions at Philadelphia, I could not but wish that others might attain the like deliverance. I therefore preached in every place of importance between Philadelphia and Buffalo, on the doctrine of future punishment, founded on the supposition of a local hell, and a resurrection of animal beings. My desire was to expose my sentiments to the most rigorous investigation; and if any person could present any reasonable objection, to allow it full weight. * But alas! mystery Babylon, built on a family of corporeal and sensual gods, and baneful partiality, erected on the fables of Elysian fields and Pluto's kingdom, were, on every trial, found as destitute of evidence, as the Theogony of Hesiod or the tribunal of Minas. And though many laymen and clergymen, who made the experiment of a comparison of opinions, do still, at least, profess to believe their former sentiments, yet they could not but feel extremely disappointed. Conviction, however, is useless for the vast majority of mankind, who have neither honesty to avow nor courage to defend. But I feel content. It would grieve me to obtain such men for disciples, who, like Esau, sell every day their birthright for a mess of pottage. Preaching at Canandaigua May 25, to a large congregation of all denominations, none of whom knew my sect or opinions, till they learned them from my discourse, I asked the audience, why the doctrine of the Devil had been so much valued by the theologians and those who have been esteemed evangelical preachers? and thus answered: "These men have no doubt observed that certain birds never seek to domiciliate with man, unless pursued by the hawk, and having painted their God in such a hideous form, that none could desire him, they believed it necessary to set the Devil after the Christians, to chase them home to heaven!" This remark pleased a part of the congregation very much; and made the worshippers of Baal groan in spirit, being burdened for fear the honor of his satanic majesty would come into disrepute.

Preaching concerning the bad tendency of a doctrine, at Buffalo, June 6, I asked could any conceive of a more abandoned character than that despicable wretch, who traversing the streets, uttered, against any of his fellow creatures, the horrid imprecation, God d—n your soul! Surely not. But who taught the man to use such expressions? Evangelical Preachers! Yes, Evangelical Preachers first cursed men to hell in the pulpit, and these vile beings curse them in the streets. Whether then are the preachers in the pulpits, or the vile characters in the streets most to blame? Certainly the Preachers! For if God does what they say, to those who offend him, we have as good a right to act similarly towards those who offend us? All religion consists in imitation of God. If men wish cursing to be banished from the

*For this purpose, I have an hundred times, publicly challenged to the contest the advocates of misery, in another state of existence.

streets, let them first banish it from the sacred desk! If God do not forgive those who offend him, how can he ask us to forgive those who offend us? To resolve these queries by a reference to Divine sovereignty, is to make the case worse: for it only represents God the greater tyrant, in proportion to his illimitable power, and hides from view his goodness, justice, and mercy, which are as unbounded as his power. Therefore, just as sure as the vilest cursings are offensive to the ear of a pious and sober man, just so sure are the doctrines of Hell and the Devil injurious, false, and blasphemous.

Returning from Buffalo, I visited West Bloomfield, where I experienced much friendship, at the house of Elias D. Wight, who, in company with a few others, engaged me to preach a few months, in that vicinity. During this time I preached occasionally at Richmond and Livonia, and formed a Society, of which John Adams and Joshua Philips are worthy members. About this time I had a public controversy with some methodist preachers, an abstract of which was then published, and is here inserted in the form of a dialogue. Though in that part between me and Mr. Williams, each had fifteen minutes allowed to reply, yet nothing is here presented, but an answer, in a few words, containing the substance of what was said, taken from minutes of the discussion.

Richmond, (Ont.) August 10. While preaching from 1 John iv. 14, I cited 1 Tim. iv. 10. The Rev. Mr. Wright, Methodist Minister, being present, interrupted me by citing, with peculiar emphasis, the last part of the verse. I turned and said to him, Sir, you are either ignorant of the language or doctrine of the Apostle, for Paul hath plainly asserted, "God is the Saviour of all men," which proposition is true, and independent of the second in the text, viz: "especially of them that believe." I then observed to the congregation, I feared no consequences, if any gentleman was prepared to address them with greater advantage to the interests of truth and piety, I would immediately yield, being persuaded that none could successfully contradict my discourse, otherwise than by proving the apostles false teachers.

Mr. W. then addressing the people remarked, that I had talked much of Jesus as a Saviour, but never informed them *from what* he saved men. This he thought was of the highest importance. He then told us, Jesus saved men from original sin, and by his death procured an offer of salvation to all men. He asserted salvation to be conditional; cited Mark xvi. 16, and exclaimed, what damnation is this? If the wicked receive all their punishment in this world, the righteous must also receive their reward, consequently, there is no heaven nor salvation after death. God cannot save men in their sins, and if they die in

them they must go to hell. He then referred to 2 Cor. v. 11, and spoke of the terrors of the Lord. Here he began to vociferate, and beat the desk most tremendously. He afterwards observed that I labored to make men Universalists, not Christians, but because he knew the terrors of the Lord, he warned them against me as one of the false prophets spoken of, Ezek. xiii. Here he ended his parody.

I replied, The angel commanded Joseph to call his son Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins, and not merely from original sin, as Mr. W. had asserted. If Jesus save men from original sin only, then he is no Saviour, and the name is misapplied. If God damn men to all eternity, can he torment them any longer? If not, of what advantage is the pardon of original sin? Secondly, If God cannot save man in his sins, who shall save him? If man must be delivered from his sins before God, or Christ become his Saviour, can either of them be called a Saviour? Is not man his own Saviour? What salvation does he need, when he has freed himself from sin! As to the words damned, damnation, there is not a word in all the original Scriptures, which will bear to be so translated. This will appear evident by translating the original word damned, wherever it occurs. Thus he that believeth not shall be damned.* The Father damneth no man, but has committed all damnation to the Son.† God sent his Son not to damn the world.‡ Who then can damn men? If God and Christ do not, can the Devil? If so, he must be more potent than the Almighty, for he wills that all should be saved,‖ and sent his Son to save the world, § and to destroy the Devil and his works.¶ Mr. W. infers that if the words of Solomon be true,* those of Peter must be false.† But let him read his Bible before he undertake to combat Universalism, and he will find answers to all his ignorant and irreverent objections. About the meaning of Ezek. xiii. I will not contend: Jer. xxiii. from the 22d to the 33d verse will answer my purpose. God says "*he is against the dreamers that use their tongues, and say he saith.* Jude also speaks of filthy dreamers. As Mr. W. is unable to support his opinions by Biblical testimony, let him go to the credulous dupes of superstition, to publish his dreams, and proclaim the terrors of a frantic imagination. We say to men, Fear not. God is love, and the Lord God Omnipotent reigns alone.

Mendon, Munroe, August 13. I preached from Isa. iii. 12. After service five Methodist Preachers assembled for combat, and the following Socratic disputation ensued:

The Rev. Mr. Williams commenced the attack, by demanding if I believed God had foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

*Mark xvi. 16. †John v. 22. ‡John iii. 17. ‖1 Tim. ii. 4. §1 John iv. 14. ¶Heb. ii. 24. 1 John iii. 8. †Prov. ii. 31. ‡1 Pet. i. 3. 4.

Thompson. I believe and teach God has foreordained the salvation of the whole human family, and will bring it to pass.

W. I am requested to ask you to reply, yes, or no, to my questions, without any qualification or illustration.

T. I am not a Calvinist, neither came I to discuss the doctrine of necessity. If you desire information on that subject read the works of Leibnitz, Hartley, and Priestley.

W. I beg to decline the perusal of these authors, and demand a reply to my first question.

T. Sir, if your question include all things, even the most minute, I reply, no: for I do not believe God foreordained a child to cry, and its nurse to rock the cradle.

W. I am desired to change the question, and ask, Do you believe God has decreed all moral events or actions?

T. Sir, I believe you do not intend to discuss the subject fairly, but to obtain an opportunity of exciting against me the prejudices of the vulgar. If you insist on a reply, I must be allowed to ask you, do you believe God foreknew whatsoever comes to pass?

W. We came not to answer but to ask questions.

T. Then you confirm my suspicions of your intentions. I teach, God hath predestined all men to eternal salvation, according to the good pleasure of his own will, and that he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and refer you to Ephesians i. 4—12.

W. We believe that God decreed that all might be saved if they would.

T. Then you believe that God decreed just nothing, or that he decreed his will, should be determined by man's.

W. You will not come to terms. Therefore we will not continue the debate.

T. The terms are evident, I came here to preach the salvation of all men; you to calumniate the doctrine. If you are able to refute it, I pray you proceed.

W. You will not commence at the beginning.

T. God determined to create and beatify a world of mankind, there is the beginning. He governs them according to his good purpose, there is the middle; and he will effect the salvation of all his intelligent offspring, there is the end. Now, gentlemen, you have the beginning, middle and end of God's designs, and of my preaching, and you feel yourselves unable to oppose either.

Here a motion was made by the Rev. Mr. Weeks for an adjournment, and the appointment of a committee to determine the subject, and manner of debate. During some altercation which followed, an aged man stood up, and addressed the audience.

Gentlemen—I have come twelve miles to hear this debate. I wish to know, before I return, whether the Salvationists or Damnationists shall gain the victory. If the Salvationists, I go home

rejoicing. If not, I shall return mourning. Gentlemen, I have a family, and I love them. (Here the tears flowed copiously and the man showed great agitation.) Having stood in speechless perturbation for some time, he proceeded. Gentlemen, I fear not for myself. For twenty years, my faith in the Divine Mercy has remained unshaken, but I feel for others. O, let me know if I may reasonable hope for the salvation of my family.

T. Men, women, and children, go to your homes, congratulate each other, we are all about to meet shortly in heaven. Tell your neighbours here are several Methodist Preachers, who are unable to cite a single text for the existence of hell or the devil, or a punishment, after death. I have preached to you the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. If you love your neighbours as well as yourselves, you will come to hear me, but if you are partial and malevolent, and desire to see the destruction of those who may have offended you, then you will go to hear these Methodist Ministers, who preach the horrid doctrine, that God hates his creatures, and will send the greater part of them to endless misery.

The audience was then dismissed, and the meeting adjourned until Wednesday, the 27th inst.

August 27, met according to adjournment. The house being incapable of receiving the people, men were sent to erect seats in the woods. In the mean time our Methodist brethren invited the people to a capacious and elegant church, lately erected in Mendon. The Rev. J. Badger, and T. Dixon, Esq. being appointed Chairmen, and Dr. Knickerboker and Dr. Allen, Secretaries, the subject of debate was demanded.

Thompson. Every man must know that the subject is, whether all men or only a few shall be saved.

Willams. Mr. Thompson has asserted, there is no punishment after death. Let him maintain or abandon the assertion.

T. Mr. Williams and his brethren, preach the doctrine of endless misery. Let them support their sentiments. Notwithstanding, if they acknowledge the restitution of all things, or admit that they are unable to oppose the final salvation of all men, I will maintain the full and eternal salvation of all mankind.

W. You are bound to do so. We have met you to combat that sentiment. You have said five Methodist Elders had agreed to debate, and you were willing to grant them their own terms.

T. I suppose there are twice that number of you, but I care not whether there are five or fifty-five. You appear like men shut up in a city, strongly besieged and bombarded by the enemy. Conscious that your stores are scanty, and the enemy powerful and vigorous, ye are desirous of being as parsimonious as possible. Have your own terms.

W. Prove your doctrine, that all pain is temporal.

T. I have asserted the doctrine, it is yours to disprove what I have affirmed.

W. We wish to hear your manner of defence.

T. Professors of the religion of Jesus—At the age of fifteen I determined to be a Minister of Christ. Since that period of life, twenty years have been spent searching for truth, which I ever have considered as a pearl of great price.* I am forced to become your preacher on this occasion. Forced, did I say? O, no! my soul exults in God my Saviour, that ever he counted me faithful, by putting me into the ministry. Assisted by a liberal education, and I trust an unprejudiced mind, I have laboured night and day, till it has pleased God that the films of ignorance and prejudice should fall from my eyes. Now I regard my opponents as the Sadducees, to whom Jesus says,† "Yon do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they are as the angels of God in heaven." Yes, my hearers, these men are ignorant of the Scriptures, concerning the resurrection, and God's almighty transforming power, which shall change our vile bodies into his own likeness. Shall any of Adam's offspring, rise in sinful unhappy circumstances at the resurrection? Jesus, faithful and true witness! thou shalt decide, "They are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."‡ Then permit me to ask, have not Jesus, Paul, and John, for ever settled the controversy? O, yes, your conscience will affirm, your attachment to the religion of Jesus will compel you to admit, that in the resurrection, all shall be happy. Shall my opponents say, the witnesses contradict themselves? If they attempt to maintain this, they will ruin their own cause as well as mine; for in doing so, they will overturn the evidence of Christianity. Though I believe the argument drawn from the resurrection is as immoveable as the pillars of Heaven, yet I can bring additional evidence before you, when needed. My opponents will not dare to deny that God loved the whole world, when he gave his Son to die for it.§ Zephaniah ‖ declares, "God shall rest in his love." John says, "Those whom Christ loved once, he loved to the end."¶ "God's love is everlasting."* O, my fellow preachers, renounce a God that will save to day, and damn to-morrow; he is not worthy your confidence. In him you cannot find rest for your souls! Jehovah, the Father of us all, is Almighty, infinitely wise and good. As soon shall the eternal reservoir of means, which Jehovah has in his eternal power, be exhausted, as he shall suffer one of his little ones to fall into the regions of despair, or divine abandonment.

W. Jesus says, few shall be saved; and Paul, that the wick-

* Matt. xiii. 46. † Matt. xxii. 29, 30. ‡ Luke xx. 36. Read Rom. iii. 19—22, and 1 Cor. xv. from the 35th verse to to the end. See also Phil. iii 21, and 1 John iii. 2. § John iii. 16. ‖ iii. 17. ¶ John xiii 1. * Jer. xxxi. 3.

ed shall be punished with everlasting destruction. (Here he commented.)

T. I predicted that my opponents would endeavor to make Christ contradict himself. If they had read their Bibles, they would have known that the terms *saved*, *salvation*, are used in a temporal as well as spiritual sense; and the term *destruction*, implies annihilation, or, at least, decomposition, consequently, there can be no pain after death.

W. I can cite a passage where you must admit, destroy, does not mean to annihilate. "O, Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself. Destroy this body, and I will raise it up."

T. Jesus says, destroy this temple, i. e. take asunder all its component parts; consequently, it shall cease to be a temple; i. e. the temple shall be annihilated. O, Israel thou hast destroyed thyself; as a people, or body politic.

W. Jesus says, fear him, that after the body is dead, can destroy both soul and body in hell. Here is pain after death.

T. You have not proved the proposition. For if the body were dead, as the text presupposes, then, as a dead body, it could not feel pain in dissolution, even by fire. And if the soul be immaterial and immortal, as you affirm, it could not be destroyed, nor decomposed. If it be material and mortal, it died with the body, and was unconscious; consequently, there could be no pain after death. Moreover, no honest man would have translated the original world, *gehennah*, by the term hell; nor would any rational man suppose an immaterial soul could be destroyed by material fire.

W. The unbeliever shall not see life, his part shall be taken out of the book of life and the holy city.

L. If the unbeliever cannot see life, and you cannot deny but that all have been unbelievers, then we must all go to hell together, and your doctrine is universal damnation. If you read Dan. xii. 1, 2, 7, and Rev. xii. 7; xx. 9, and 21 to 26, you will easily see, that the book of life and the holy city, refer to the circumstances of an ecclesiastical polity, and not to those of heaven. Paul says, man's unbelief shall not make the faith of God of none effect. God has concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy on all.*

W. The terms everlasting and eternal, are applied to the punishment of the wicked, and also to the Deity. Now, if these words mean not endless. we cannot prove that God or the saints shall be eternal, or that heaven shall be eternal.

T. This argument is a mean sophism, which will appear ridiculous when unmasked. Thus, I am tall, the steeple of this church is tall; therefore, I am as tall as the steeple. Napoleon is great, God is great; therefore, Napoleon is as great as God. I stand prepared to prove, that the word translated everlasting

* Rom. iii. 3, and xi. 32.

eternal, is by the best authorities, Homer, and the sacred writers, limited to the age of the youngest person in this church.

W. You can probably prove the word, everlasting, to mean only one day.

T. I did not say so—but Jonah limits its extent to three days. And I defy any respectable Greek scholar to say it means endless, without blushing.

W. It is applied to the punishment of the wicked, in connexion with the final judgment.*

T. If you would look at the adverbs used in the 31st verse, and then read Matt. xvi. 27, 28, Matt. xxiv. 3, unto the 35th. John xxi. 21, 23. 1 Pet. iv. 7, you would be forced to admit the judgment is past 1700 years, and consequently the punishment was temporal.

W. The sin against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven in this world, nor in that which is to come.

T. Sir, you preach, and your discipline asserts, that Jesus made a full atonement, oblation and sacrifice, for the sins of the whole world. If Jesus paid the debt, how could it be forgiven? According to orthodoxy, God forgives no sin, however small. Moreover, if a man commit murder, and be put to death for it, shall any pretend that the man was forgiven?

W. Do you admit there is any sin? Let this be decided.

T. I know not what you call sin; pray explain Acts ii. 23, and iv. 28. How could the Jews crucify Jesus with wicked hands, when delivered by the determinate counsel of God?

W. God delivered him for our offences, or offered him as a Saviour, and the Jews put him to death?

T. Then the Jews did much more to save the world, than God, for he only offered Jesus to be a Saviour, and the Jews by killing him, made him a Saviour; this is the best account I ever heard of them.

W. We believe the Jews did not put Jesus to death. The Lord made him an offering, and his wrath lay heavy on him, and occasioned the death of Christ.

T. I hear something more horrible, than I have ever before heard fall from the lips of a man, viz: that the wrath of God killed Jesus, whom, with an audible voice from heaven, he had declared to be his well beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased.

W. Then the Father might deliver Christ, and the Jews, as free agents, might put him to death.

T. So then the Father only helped Judas to betray Jesus, and consequently Judas, was a co-worker with God. The term agent, cannot apply to man, who is entirely dependent. Pilate and the Jews did only what God's power and wisdom had predetermined to be done. Acts. iv. 28. Jesus said to Pilate "You could have no power against me, except it were given you from on high."†

*Matt. xxv. 46. †John xix. 11. See Gen. l. 20. Isa. xlv. 7, & Am. iii. 6.

W. Then you do not believe in original sin, nor total depravity, consequently no change of nature is needed.

T. I know not what you call original sin; you tell me of the devil sinning in heaven, which if true, was before Adam sinned. Then you tell of Adam's sin being original. You talk of man's changing his nature, first to evil then to good. I believe all such stories, to be fanatical and imaginary. Every man has the nature God gave him, and God will never damn one man for another's offence.

W. I don't say he will, Jesus saves men from the sin of Adam and all its consequences.

T. When will Jesus save man from Adam's sin and all its consequences?

W. In the resurrection.

T. You have stated that human depravity and corrupt nature, as well as all actual sin flow from Adam. Now the argument is at an end. You have either committed yourself, or you are as much a Universalist as myself.

At a meeting of the Genesee Association, September 24, 1823, I applied for fellowship and ordination, which were both granted. It may here be asked, were you a preacher so long without ordination? I answer, yes; for though I was examined and appointed a preacher, among the Methodists, at the quarterly meeting in the city of Derry, June 1813, neither I nor any other Methodist preacher in the British Isles, was ever ordained to be a Minister in said British Isles; for there Methodists are republican, in America they are aristocrats; Proteus like, *any thing to please.* Hence, in England, there is no form of ordination attempted among the Methodists. But in America, forsooth, Jesus Christ, if the Methodist representation be true, being offended at democratical equality which he once taught his disciples and the Methodists of England, changed his administration, and established, *Jure Divino*, Episcopal hierachy, according to which, a man must have one ordination for a Deacon, another for a Priest, and at least a third for a Bishop! a specimen of ridiculous boyish foppery, not exceeded in all the reveries of fanaticism, the pride of papal arrogancy, nor the usurpation of political despotism. An assumption which can only exist where the New Testament is disbelieved or set at open defiance.

The one ordination to the office of Presbyter, is the lowest and highest which the New Testament sanctions in relation to the sacred ministry: and thus the subject was understood in the primitive church. The Presbyterian form of church discipline is therefore the most correct, Christian, Apostolic, and rational in existence, and all other forms are more or less scriptural and perfect, in proportion as they approximate to the Presbyterian. This is not the opinion of prejudice nor inexperience, it is the result of

long, disinterested and careful examination. I submit to forms of utility and decorum, and desire to see them observed, but I am persuaded neither ordination nor consecration makes a bad man good or a good better. It is clear that Barnabas and Saul were preachers in the days of the apostles, for some time, before they were ordained to the ministry.* As a specimen of the usual form, we insert the following certificate of Ordination.

To all whom it may Concern.

"This certifies that the Rev. John S. Thompson, being an approved minister of the Gospel, was, at Pittsford, N. Y. September 25, 1823, publicly ordained as an Evangelist, in full fellowship with the Genesee and Western Associations of Universalists; and is hereby recommended to the patronage, confidence, and brotherly kindness of all, who believe in the "Restitution of all things," and love our Lord, in sincerity.

By order of the Genesee Association.

Attest, { OLIVER ACKLEY, / SAMUEL A. SKEELE, } Clk's.

ISAAC WHITNAL, Moderator.

Having begun to preach, occasionally, in Rochester, I removed thither shortly after the Association. Here I preached every second Sabbath in each month. I also held evening lectures, on Friday of every week for the first three months, and submitted to be interrogated on all religious subjects, by any member of the congregation. As might have been expected, a vast variety and a motley collection of questions were proposed. Finding that many gained confidence and freedom of speech by this means, I instituted a Berean Society for the discussion of religious subjects indiscriminately. The subjects discussed were as follow: The Nature of the Soul; The Doctrine of the Trinity; The Deity of Jesus; The pre-existence of Christ; The existence of Satan: Does the Old Testament teach the doctrine of a future existence? Does a man's belief or unbelief facilitate or retard his entrance to Heaven? Is there any pain in another mode of existence? The doctrine of the Atonement: &c.

During this year, I published the "Rochester Magazine and Theological Review;" which, though somewhat severe, was not ill adapted to check the proud pretentions of partiality, and excite a more particular attention to the doctrine and criticism of the Bible. In the fourteenth page of this work, replying to a pamphlet by Mr. Covel, in which he charged Universalism with a licentious tendency, I answered: "We admit, Sir, that the character of God may be both slandered and traduced, even as basely as you have done in your pamphlet! But what follows?

* See Acts 13. 1—4.

Chastisement, fatherly chastisement! Look out for the rod, Sir, it cannot be far off." Far off it was not! for in four or five weeks after, his death took place in the most sudden and unprecedented manner! As we said in the Magazine, so now, we do not allege this case as absolute proof of our doctrine, but the whole history of orthodoxy, cannot prove one so well authenticated fact in its favor. The means by which he and some other Methodist preachers at Rochester, carried their opposition towards me and the doctrine I taught, was fully characteristic of the sect; but for the sake of humanity, I decline publishing the disgusting detail of particulars.

Shortly after this, a certain man arriving in Rochester, thought it was his duty to confound me with argument, expose the vileness of Universalism, and perhaps do something worthy of all praise. Immediately on entering my room, where I sat writing, he commenced his address in such wise, that I soon perceived his intent. Sir, I am a stranger, I am informed you are a Universalist preacher. There are difficulties in the way of your doctrine, which seem to me insurmountable; and I wonder how you can get over them. Name the principal said I. The sin against the Holy Ghost. What of it? Those who commit that sin must go to Hell! What sort of a place is Hell? A place of eternal burnings. Will we have the same bodies then, and be capable of the same feelings? Yes. Well Sir, there is no reason why we should be much concerned; for one minute will despatch us, and pain will be at an end. Not so, Sir, said he, God will make us all able to endure the fire. Well, Sir, replied I, only let us understand the matter, and there is no necessity for alarm. If God make us complete salamanders, we shall like the fire as the fish do the waters. He departed without reply.

I should not have left Rochester, had I succeeded to obtained a Church, but the Society was too timid, and perhaps too weak, to build a house of sufficient size and respectability: and through the inconvenience, arising from the want of a suitable place of worship, the prospects of the Society were darkened. During the months of January, February, and March, 1825, I preached one half of the time at Palmyra, in the Academy. The meetings were as respectable, and nearly as numerous as at any other place of worship in that township, and I have no doubt but the foundation was then laid of a respectable Society in that village.

A Methodist preacher who attended two of my discourses at Palmyra, observed to some of the congregation, that if the Lord would convert me, I would make an excellent minister. As to conversion, if he meant religious impressions, I have been acquainted with these from my youth up, but if he meant a change of opinion from the knowledge of the Father as the only true God, and Jesus whom he hath sent as the Saviour of the world, I believe God will never convert me nor any other man from it to

the gloomy darkness of doubtfulness and the cancerous infection of blind partiality. May the Lord ever save me from the desperate and pernicious influence of superstition, on the one hand, and the unhallowed miserable tendency of unbelief and hardness of heart, on the other: that I may, through grace, walk in the middle path of truth and righteousness, and thereby adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things.

At the house of my worthy friend, P. Holmes, Palmyra, I had an interview with an impeccable Methodist, who had enjoyed full sanctification for five years; and positively said he could not sin! We held a close discussion for about one hour, which terminated thus:

Z. I pray that you may be convinced of your error.

T. Can you really pray in faith for me?

Z. I ought.

T. And for all men?

Z. Yes.

T. Then you must be a Universalist; for none but Universalists can pray, as the Scriptures direct, for all men.

Z. I was once a Universalist, but the Lord convinced me I was wrong.

T. What made you a Universalist?

Z. Following my carnal reason.

T. What convinced you of your mistake?.

Z. The spirit of the Lord and my Bible.

T. If your Bible convinced you, you can tell us what passages were instrumental in producing this effect.

Z. The Bible generally.

T. You must be particular and name the very words which say that Universalism is an error.

Z. If I should begin to reason about the Bible, as you do, I should be a Universalist yet.

T. Then it is clear, your reason teaches you to be a Universalist still, and only tradition and your own imagination teach you that it is an error.

Z. I admit my reason leads me to be a Universalist.

T. Does it even now lead you to believe so?

Z. It does.

T. Then, Sir, instead of your being a sanctified person, you are, most assuredly, a great hypocrite, pretending to be a Methodist, when in reality, you believe Universalism; for no man existing can believe otherwise than as his reason determines.

Z. I desire to be guided by the spirit.

T. Men profess to be guided by the same spirit, to very different results. The Quaker says, wait in silence; the Methodist says, sing and pray lustily; the Calvinist says, Christ died only for a few; the Arminian says he most assuredly died for all. In all this contradiction, Protestants pretend to be guided by the

spirit of the Lord, whilst the Roman Catholic affirms the whole to be a damnable heresy. I therefore will follow no guide contrary to my reason.

In 1825, I removed to Utica, and commenced the publication of "The Universalist," a periodical paper, designed to disseminate the doctrine of *Universal Benevolence*. Here I delivered two discourses, Sabbath the 24th April, on the doctrine of Universalism, and have continued to preach statedly, from that time, in the Court House. My labors in this place, I trust, have been blessed; and in a religiously barren heath, where nothing but weeds grew, a goodly Society has been established, which promises to prosper beyond the warmest anticipations. I have founded the Societies of Richmond and Livonia, Rochester, and Utica, out of entirely new materials: for as yet I have entered into no man's labors; but have preached where Christ was not named as a Universal Saviour! In this I rejoice: and my joy no man taketh from me.

As the Constitutions adopted by these Societies were formed by me, and, consequently, essentially the same, I will here present that of the Society of Utica, which I intend to inculcate, every where, as far as the Lord may prosper me, or my influence extend.

Utica, November 21, 1825.

A number of persons, believing the doctrine of God's *impartial and universal love*, having assembled in the Court House, according to lawful and public notices, with a view to organize a religious Society, and having appointed Rev. John S. Thompson, Chairman, and John L. Carpenter, Clerk, they proceeded to adopt the following resolutions.

I. This Society shall be distinguished by the appellation of the "First Universalist Society of Utica, N. Y."

II. Its officers will consist of Five Trustees, *chosen according to law*, and a Clerk and Treasurer, to be *chosen annually*. The *Clerk* shall keep faithfully, all *papers* belonging to the Society, and transmit them to his successor in office. The *Treasurer* shall receive and preserve all *monies* of the Society, keep a faithful account, dispose of them according to the direction of the Trustees, and transfer what may remain, with a correct record of his account, (*audited by the Clerk*) to his successor in office.

III. The Society will meet *annually, on the anniversary of its organization*, to choose its officers, and transact such business as may come before it *Special* meetings, however, may be called by the Trustees, at the request of *ten* members, and *every member* shall be entitled to vote at every meeting of the Society, and all matters determined by a *majority* of votes.

IV. There shall be a STANDING COMMITTEE, consisting of *three members*, viz: THE MINISTER AND TWO DEACONS, whose business shall be to attend to the moral character of candidates and members; and to make regular reports of their proceedings to the annual or special meetings of the Society.

V. Candidates for fellowship, must be proposed to the STANDING COMMITTEE; and if approved, may be admitted on *subscribing* to the Constitution: and members who may wish to withdraw, shall receive a certificate of moral character.

VI. This Society will continue the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's supper; and leave to the conscience of every member, not only the observance, but also the manner of administration.

VII. This Society adopts the following ARTICLES OF FAITH, in its Constitution, to which all its members *truly* assent.

We believe in One Eternal, Unchangeable, and Infinitely Wise, Good, and Powerful Lord God, who is the SOLE Creator, Proprietor, and Governor of the Universe, the *common Father*, and *impartial Benefactor* of *all Mankind.*

We believe Jehovah, who spoke in times past by the Jewish Prophets, has spoken to us by his Son Jesus, *The Christ*, whom he hath appointed *heir of all things*; and by whom as *the Mediator*, he will bring *all his intelligent offspring* to eternal purity and happiness.

We believe virtue and happiness, vice and misery are inseparably connected, as cause and effect; and, consequently, in order to be happy, men must *do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.*

On surveying my history during the last three years, I feel truly thankful to the Father of lights and God of all grace, for the improvement I have made in the better understanding of the holy Scriptures, and for the assistance I have been enabled to afford to others. I have new modelled the faith of thousands as well as my own. I have assisted in re-organizing the Western Association, and in forming the Hudson River Association, and the Universalist Convention in this State. I have disseminated the Gospel, by personal ministry, over all that country lying on the Great Western road from Little Falls to Buffalo, extending northward towards the Lakes; and also, occasionally in Genesee, Livingston, Ontario, Cayuga, and Madison to the south. By my preaching and publishing the frozen zones of scepticism and partiality, as also the torrid zone of frantic enthusiasm, have been commuted for that temperate clime, benignly warmed by the moderate rays of a fructifying Sun, and gently cooled by refreshing breezes which tend to expand the foliage, and produce health and abundance.

To conclude, I am satisfied to have lived; and that *I have never in all my life, as far as I remember, been led by either fear or hope, to*

speak or act contrary to my convictions. I am content that I came to America, thankful that I joined the Universalists, and above all, I rejoice, that with the exception of the gentlemen whose names appear in my dedication, and the Rev. Richard Wright, Unitarian Missionary, I have yielded to no man in modern times, in assiduity, and I trust success, in labors of love for the emancipation of degraded human intellect. I say labors of love, for I have never received the sum of one thousand dollars as the products of my ministry, during thirteen years, in which I have travelled over as many thousand miles for the dissemination of the Gospel.

This perfectly answers to the oracular prediction of 1814. Most persons know, that among the Methodists it is common to attempt divination by consulting fortuitously a passage in the Bible. Some of my friends having persuaded me to either seek a situation in the ministry that would afford me a decent support, or to forsake the profession, I was somewhat agitated in mind: and being in Newry, Ireland, I entered the Methodist Chapel, went to the pulpit, shut my eyes, and in the name of God, pushed my finger into the Bible where I first touched it, saying, I select number 10 the first time it occurs on the right hand page. The passage was Ecclesiastes 5. 10, which reads thus: "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase." I received the verse as the voice of God, and on reading the next verse, "when goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?" I exclaimed, truth, Lord, the world is vanity! O, may my life be spent in thy service.

Before I left England, I dreamed Christ descended from the firmament, in a glare of brightness, exceeding ten fold the brilliancy of the meridian Sun, and that he came to me, saying: "I commission you to go and tell mankind that I am come; and bid every man to shout victory." This I apply to my proclamation of free and Universal Salvation! Socrates attributed all the good he did and taught to a good spirit, who continually attended him. He also believed *that man mad*, who disbelieved the Divine influence! I agree with Socrates: there has not been one remarkable event of my life, of which I have not had previous intimation; often God teaches by dreams, and David said his reins instructed him in the night seasons.* But never will I, nor never have I attempted, by such means, the proof of any doctrine not clearly taught in the Scriptures, and approved by an unprejudiced understanding. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bless every well meant effort to advance his glory, and spread his Son's kingdom in the earth, till the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth as the waters the channels of the seas.—Amen.

*Ps. 16. 7

CHARACTER.

It has been supposed, that the character of an author is best drawn from his works, but this is not fully correct: and if it were, few men are of sufficient discernment to perceive the features of the painting, with due accuracy. The following description is, therefore, presented to the public, under full assurance, that if *self-love* has cast a veil over any feature, *no man in existence can ever disprove any fact*, in the narrative. I never expected my name would have occupied so much of the public attention, but as it has been frequently traduced, a true picture is offered, for the satisfaction or amusement of my friends and enemies, according to their disposition. Being of the earth, earthly, I have, like most men, often felt my mind led captive by the control of passion, which as a resistless monster, has frequently borne an unhallowed pre-eminence over the dictates of my understanding; and induced me to exclaim with Paul: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" * Irritability, in temperament, has often been my unpleasant companion: and though I have often labored to defeat its attacks, being conscious of its bad tendency, yet I have found it as untamable as the constitution of nature. Every man retains that disposition of nature, with which he was born, which frequently fixes his character during life: but for its evil influence, he is no more blamable than for the color of his skin or the male-figuration of his body. It is well to meet the impulse of passion with the most determinate resolution to curb its action, as far as possible; but after the most persevering exertions, thousands of Adam's posterity, are left to groan being burdened. † However, I thank kind Heaven, that neither anger or hatred has ever led me to a single act of cruelty or malevolence, in all my life time. From early youth, when first I read the advice of the Apostle: ‡ "Let not the Sun go down upon your wrath," I have never dared to sleep, till I have felt reconciled to the whole human race. Indeed, the wise man has well said: "anger resteth in the bosom of fools." ‖ Notwithstanding, I have experienced a disposition; common to many of my countrymen, not to confide in a person whom I have once found deceitful or insolent. My friends have, therefore, been few; and my professions of friendship rare, and never dissembled. To fawn and flatter, I have left to dogs and sycophants! I have often reflected on the words of Elihu: § "*Let me not accept any man's person; for I know not to give flattering titles.* Decency of language, and propriety of address, I esteem, but flattery I abhor; and have abhorred, in proportion, as I have had occasion to believe it hypocritical or feigned. I have

* Rom. 7. 24. † Rom. 8. 22. 2. Cor. 5. 4. ‡ Eph. 4. 26. ‖ Eccl. 7. 9. § Job. 22. 32.

been sometimes accused of pride or ambition, but probably not deservedly, at least to any considerable extent; for I have often thought as meanly of myself, as my accusers have represented. I am well convinced, that a man without a degree of self-love, will never be capable of gratitude to God, or social duty to man. Some Philosophers have ascribed the *moral sense* to *sympathy*; and if this theory be correct, the less self-love the less morality. He that would violate this principle, offers an insult to the whole constitution of nature. A false humility I always despised, believing, that as we ought not to think too highly of ourselves, * so neither ought we to think too meanly, and thereby despise the divine workmanship and benevolence. Hence, to describe myself as being worse than I really believed, appeared to me as base detraction of character, as if I had been guilty of defamation in relation to others: and I venture to affirm, that whoever is liberal in self-defamation, will not hesitate to deal out the same measure to his neighbour, which he may have meeted for himself. I, therefore, never thought it my duty to tell God or man, that I was either better or worse than I really and sincerely believed. A desire of emulation has frequently been felt, but envy never obtained an entrance to my bosom; for I have always regarded it, as the sure mark of cowardice and conscious inferiority.

I remember, in the year 1814, to have lost the favor of a brother preacher, and a company of very humble souls, at Tullamore, Ireland, because I would not consent to sing the following contemptible piece of Wesleyan feigned humility:

Make me little and unknown,
Loved and prized by God alone!

Having remonstrated strongly against the hymn when given, I would not contradict myself: therefore, while the preacher and company sang the above foolish composition, I sang the following hasty amendment, as distinctly as possible:

Make me useful and well known,
Loved of God, despised by none.

This, to be sure, was a great crime, in the eyes ef the sanctimonious: but I had the satisfaction of telling God my desires, and they the folly of presenting prayers, which, they must have inwardly hoped, would never be regarded by the Almighty. My mind has been my kingdom, over which I have maintained an absolute monarchy, yet not so as to excuse myself from the most abject and implicit obedience to its imperial dictates. Hence, I have never feared to follow nor to avow its convictions, both in morality and doctrine.

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.

Oft when advised to sinful conformity, either in reality or ap

* Rom. 12. 3.

pearance, I have felt the disposition to use, and have sometimes actually applied, the words of Jesus: "get thee behind me satan." * Many men thing they play a noble *role*, on the theatre of the religious world, if their preaching be admired, especially by other sects besides that to which they belong; but I have never known an honest man of this description. They are altogether such as preach themselves, and not Jesus Christ nor his Gospel. The meanest being on earth stands higher, in my approbation, than a deceitful whining preacher! And I verily believe, I and God are of one opinion on this subject.

My language in speaking and writing has often been tart, and sometimes satyrical: I have often been advised by unthinking men, to avoid that manner, but it is my manner: and if it cease, my identity is lost with it. Every man has his own character to act on the stage of time; and were he to perfectly mimic any other, his individuality, as part of God's design in creation, would be lost to the world. Besides there never was an instance of a great Reformer, in the history of mankind, but combined in his discourse, more or less of the two foregoing characters of style. Among the Jews, may be particularized Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others of the Prophets. Among the Christians, Jesus, Paul, Calvin, Luther, and Knox. In none of my writings has the language used been more severe, than that which can be readily adduced from the sayings of these chief men, in the Jewish and Christian histories. If I am, therefore, condemned, let me stand and fall with the Jewish Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, and the Christian Reformers.

I beg to say, notwithstanding, I have no desire to offend; and on the other hand, thank God, I have made no studied nor unlawful efforts to please! My object in preaching and writing, has been to inform the Judgment and convince the understanding—No efforts have been made to act the light headed school boy, by collecting glittering words, to form a bombastic or barbarian style. Matter has ever appeared much more important than the manner, though the latter has not been altogether neglected. It has ever appeared to me a decisive distinction between a great and a little soul, that the former esteems things according to their value, whilst the latter prefers trinkets and toys, being influenced by appearances more than substances. But the motto of a great soul is well expressed by the Latin Poet.

Nil parvum sapit, et semper, sublimia curat.

The love of learning has predominated, through all my life, over every other desire and passion of my soul: and though I have no disposition to adopt the language of an ancient Philosopher, who said, "he would willing die if he could learn something," yet I have always preferred books to clothes, victuals, or

* Matt. 16. 23.

companions. The first money I ever asked of my Father, was to purchase books: and my expense, on their account, has exceeded $3.000, which has all been deduced from a small salary, at no time exceeding $400. in the space of one year. *Dura Res!* I have often grieved, that my hard fortune laid such an embargo on my literary pursuits; but, saith Cowper: *God moves in a mysterious way.* However, thank heaven, *parvo potens, quia paupertatis studio nobilis*, I have succeeded to the accomplishment of my pristine purpose.

When I had proceeded so far in the study of Latin as to read Sallust, his introduction to the history of Catiline's conspiracy, attracted my attention: I admired his language, and appropriated his choice, which has influenced the whole of my conduct; and should have the same effect an every reflecting mind Hoping that it may have like influence on some of my readers, I give place to the passage.

"All men who desire to excel other animals, ought to make the utmost exertions, that they may not pass life in silence like cattle, which nature has subjected to passion and appetite. All our powers are either mental, or corporeal–The first are common to us with God, the latter, with the beast. Wherefore, it appeared to me more proper, to seek glory by the efforts of the understanding, than by those of bodily strength; and seeing life is short, to render my history as lasting as possible. The honors of riches and beauty are fluctuating and perishable; but virtue is esteemed glorious and eternal."*

Hence, I have been the patron and admirer of science; and loved the fellowship of those who had nobly enlisted in the holy warfare of truth, science, and liberty, against error, barbarism, and oppression: and when I have heard ignorance or fanaticism raise its impious clamour against philosophy or literature, I have remembered and sometimes recited the excellent eulogy of Cicero. "Philosophy is the parent of all the good arts; it is nothing less than the invention and gift of God."†

When I have beheld thousands of mankind, squander their precious opportunities of improvement, and of doing good, in foolish plays and pastimes, I have thought of the advisatory and beautiful language of the amiable Fenelon. "Happy they, who amuse

* Omnis homines, qui sese student praestare caeteris animalibus, summa ope niti decet, ne vitam silentio transeant, veluti, pecora, quæ natura prona, atque ventri obedientia, finxit. Sed nostra omnis vis in animo et corpore sita est. Alterum nobis cum Diis, alterum cum belluis commune est. Quo mihi rectius videtur, ingenii, quam virium, opibus gloriam quaerere; et quoniam vita ipsa, qua fruimur, brevis est, memoriam nostri quam maxime long m efficere. Nam divitiarum et formæ gloria, fluxa atque fragilis est; virtus clara, æternaque habetur.

† Philosphia est mater omnium bonarum artium, nihil est aliud nisi donum et inventum Dei.

themselves by acquiring instruction, and who delight in cultivating their minds by the sciences—Happy they, who love to read, and are not deprived of these inestimable privileges!*

As to my habits, I hope and believe they have been regular, economical and industrious. Intemperance has seldom obtained a victory. Never once, throughout the journey of life, has my judgment been impaired or my understanding beclouded by intoxication. Games of no kind have ever deprived me of one day during the period of my existence. I have never attended a Theatre but twice: once at Calais and once at London, I have never read one entire Play; nor a volume of Novels. My soul has loathed every thing that assumed the semblance of disguise or fiction, Truth, sacred, eternal truth, I desired and loved: and I soon perceived that it lay concealed; the search must be long and persevering, whilst my days were as a shadow! The pleasures and follies of the world, could, therefore, attain no ascendency over my affections. My life has been habitually devotional: and for a world, I would not resign the consolations derived from communion with God, in stated, daily prayer.

As far as in me lay, I have endeavored to do justly and love mercy. If I have been of any use to my fellow men, I attribute whatever good I have done, to the favor and blessing of heaven. If I have injured any one, it has been *inadvertently*, and *never deliberately*: therefore, I expect forgiveness from God and man. My expectation of mercy and hope of salvation, is founded on the illimitable favor of my Creator. Father, and God, manifested through Christ Jesus. I therefore feel no anxiety about the concerns of another world. My hope is fixed, and I feel resignation to the will and appointment of the sovereign disposer of all events. May his grace be sufficient for me, and his strength made perfect in my weakness.—Amen.

REVIEW OF UNIVERSALISM.

As the foregoing Memoir relates my change of opinion, first from Presbyterianism to Methodism, and lastly, from Methodism to Universalism; and as the knowledge of the last is, at present, much more limited, than that of the two former systems of religious belief, I think a brief view of Universalism necessary to complete my Memoir. This seems the more essential, seeing there still exists a diversity of sentiment among Universalists; and because I have frequently been asked: "To what scheme of Universalism do you adhere?" "What do you believe?"

It is unnecessary to enter largely into detail. All Universalists believe their doctrine to be plainly taught in the Scriptures;

‡ Heureux ceux qui se divertissent en s' instruisant, et qui se plaisent a cultiver leur esprit par les sciences!—Heureux ceux qui aiment a lire, et qui ne sont point prives de la lecture! Telemaque l. 2.

and therefore, believe it, because it is a doctrine of a well attested Revelation. The proof or vindication of the doctrine is not what is here attempted, but only a concise historical sketch for general information.

The title, *Universalist*, arises from a belief in the final salvation of the whole human family, without exception: all, therefore, who thus believe are consistently styled Universalists, though their views of the means by which the salvation of mankind will be accomplished, still remain very different. However, all Universalists may be distinctly divided into three classes, which, in accommodation to received notions, I shall denominate *Universalian Restorationists*, *Universalian Redemptionists*, and *Unitarian Universalists*.

1. The doctrine of *Restoration to purity and happiness*, has made a prominent feature in all the creeds of antiquity, from the earliest dawn of historical information, throughout the annals of all nations which have made any conspicuous figure, on the theatre of terrene existence. It will be readily admitted by all competent judges, that Egypt, Judea, and Hindoostan, gave laws and religion to the world. Egypt is called the land of Ham, and was peopled by Mizraim, the son of Ham, by which name it is still known in the Hebrew language. From the tenth chapter of Genesis, we learn that the earth was divided, in the days of Peleg, the grandson of Shem, and brother of Joktan; and that the sons of Joktan dwelt from Mesha to Sephar, a mountain of the East: and this district is supposed to correspond with that country called India. The sons of Shem were, Aram, Elam, and Asshur: of the first came the Syrians, of the second the Persians, of the third the Assyrians: Ham was father of Mizraim, Cush, and Canaan—of the first sprang the Egyptians; of the second the Babylonians, of the third the Canaanites.

Mr. Maurice, in a very elaborate work, entitled "A History of the Antiquities of India," supposes that as soon as the earth became sufficiently dry, either Noah himself, or a descendant of Shem, led on the first journey from the region of Ararat, to the western frontier of India; and that this increasing Colony flourished, for a succession of ages, in innocence and happiness, practising the pure Patriarchal rites of devotion, till the descendants of Ham invaded and conquered India, and corrupted their ancient religion. Now, it is easy to conceive, that the traditions of Noah, would, in a great degree, be preserved for a long time, in the different branches of his family, which peopled Egypt, Babylon, Syria, Persia, Hindoostan, and China; and there can be no necessity for beclouding the origin of the ancient traditions, with unnecessary difficulties. It is generally admitted, that Ham and his posterity, first introduced the idolatry of the ancient nations; and that Egypt supplied the world with false gods. Still, however, it must be inferred, that no very essential difference could

exist between the religious views of the ancient Hindoos and Egyptians. As the east was peopled by the posterity of Shem, who long held the unity and worship of the One Eternal, the purest traditions were derived from the east. Moreover, from Josephus, Justin, the abridger of Trogus Pompeius, and Eusebius, it appears that Abraham was famed over all the east, as a Theologian and Philosopher. We also learn from the 25th chapter of Genesis, that Abraham gave portions to his sons by Keturah, and sent them away *eastward, into the east country.* Hence, the Brahmans, or Hindoo Priests, are supposed to have derived their name: for Brahman, is naturally derived from Abram, or Aram, implying descent from the Patriarch or his country. *

The best writers allow; that the ancient teachers of mankind, did not act the Philosopher: their business was to deliver the ancient traditions to the people; hence, all important changes must have been very slow and gradual. Now as the Veda, or Bible of the Hindoos, professes to have been written 1580 years before Christ, or near one hundred years before the Law was given to Moses at Sinai, a considerable sameness of opinion must have remained since that time. By the Gentoo doctrine concerning man's future destiny, we may form a tolerable correct view of the Patriarchal traditions in relation to this very important subject. Moreover, as the most perfect Philosophy of antiquity, was distinguished, at different periods, by the appellation of *Oriental, Platonic*, and *Egyptian*, it will easily appear, how uniform the opinion of antiquity was, from a brief view of each of these systems.

Oriental Philosophy universally contemplates man as a being, originally created pure and happy, but on account of misconduct, arising from admixture with refractory and gross matter, he has become a fallen and degraded being. From whatever mistake or misapplication of figurative language, the doctrine may have arisen, the transmigration of souls is generally believed all over the eastern nations. The professed design of the Metempsychosis is to restore degenerate spirits to their pristine state of purity and happiness. The Hindoos represent the Deity as punishing, *only to reform* his creatures; and that a *grand period* will arrive when all will be happy. The doctrine is taught in the

* Some writers have been bold enough to affirm, that no particulars of the epoch of Abraham are to be found in ancient profane history. Such, however, may be convinced of their error by turning to Josephus, *Antiq.* c. 8. where he quotes the statement of Berosus, the Chaldean historian. And in Justin. lib. xxxvi. we have the testimony of Trogus Pompeius, who says, 'the Jews derive their origin from Damascus, a famous city of Syria, their kings were Abraham and Israel.' See also Clemens Alexandrinus, *Strom. V.* and Eusebius, lib. xiii. c. 12. This is also perfectly consistent with Scripture, for we find it there stated, that he was a *mighty prince*, Gen. c. xxxiii. 2. And even the sons of Ishmael were *twelve princes according to their nations.* Gen. c. xxv. 16. Bel. Hist. Relig. p. 72.

Geeta and *Institutes of Menu*, believed to be nearly as ancient writings as the books of Moses. In these Institutes there is a long chapter, on transmigration and final beatitude. Indeed, the Hindoo sacred books represent the whole Universe, as one vast field of purification for the different classes of degenerate existences. Among the Japanese who are divided into the *Sinto* and *Budso* sects, no particular difference prevails on this subject. The Budso religion represents the souls of men and animals to be of the same substance, differing only according to the nature of their bodies, and that the souls of men will be rewarded or punished, according to their behaviour in this life; that all the vicious are after death tormented, *for a certain time*, according to the nature and number of their crimes, the number of years they spent on earth, and their opportunities for becoming good and virtuous; that when vicious souls have expiated their crimes, they are sent back to animate such vile animals, as they have resembled in their former state of existence, and hence, transmigrating into more and more noble bodies, by virtue and piety, they will attain to uninterrupted felicity: but the *Sintos*, who are the most ancient sect, do not seem to think of pain or punishment, *in an unseen state*; but believe that the souls of the good, are after death, immediately admitted to celestial enjoyment, whilst the souls of the wicked, are denied entrance, and condemned to wander till they have expiated their crimes. The *Oriental Philosophy* is supposed to have been new modelled by Zoroaster, who adopting the principle, "from nothing, nothing can be produced," taught that various orders of beings, have emanated from the Deity, which are more or less perfect as they are at a greater or less distance from the Eternal Fountain of Intelligence; but as the human soul is a particle of this divine light, it will return to its source and partake of its native and happy immortality. Thus we see the *doctrine of the Restitution*, the prevailing feature of the *Oriental* Philosophy; and founded on traditions as old as the *Foe* of the Chinese, or *Noah* of the Hebrews.

The Platonic Philosophy received its name from Plato, the most distinguished disciple of Socrates, who flourished about 400 years before Christ. On the persecution and death of his Preceptor, he retired from Athens, and travelled into the east, and also into Egypt, where he knew the tenets of the Pythagorian Philosophy and Metempsychosis had been fostered and cherished. He is said to have followed the physics of Heraclitus, the Metaphysics of Pythagoras, and the morals of Socrates. His writings were so much admired, that Quintilian esteemed them divine, and Cicero exclaims: "I would rather err with Plato, than be right with inferior men."*

The outlines of Plato's Philosophical system were as follow:— That there is one God, eternal, immutable, and immaterial; per-

* Errare malo cum Platone, quam cum istis vera sentire.

fect in wisdom and goodness; omnicient, and omnipresent. That this all-perfect Being formed the Universe out of a mass of eternally pre-existing matter, to which he gave form and arrangement. That there is in matter a necessary, but blind and refractory force, which resists the will of the supreme Artificer; so that he cannot perfectly execute his designs: and this is the cause of the mixture of good and evil, which is found in the material world. That the soul of man was derived by emanation from God; aud that this emanation was not immediate, but through the intervention of the soul of the world, which was itself debased by some material admixture. That the relation which the human soul, in its original constitution, bears to matter, is the source of moral evil. That when God formed the Universe, he separated from the soul of the world inferior souls, equal in number to the stars, and assigned to each its proper celestial abode. That these souls were sent down to earth to be imprisoned in mortal bodies ; hence arose the depravity and misery to which human nature is liable. That the soul is immortal: and by disengaging itself from all animal passions, and rising above sensible objects to the contemplation of the world of intelligence, it may be prepared to return to its original habitation. That matter never suffers annihilation : but that the world will remain forever ; and that by the action of its animating principle, it accomplishes certain periods, within which every thing returns to its ancient place and state. This periodical revolution of nature is called the Platonic, or great year.*

The learned are not agreed, whence the Grecian Philosophers derived this doctrine; but they admit it came either from India or Egypt into Greece. Herodotus † the historian, says, the doctrine of the soul and its transmigrations, originated in Egypt, and was taught in Greece, by names he knew, but would not mention. However, Cicero ‡ informs us that Pherecydes, the Preceptor of Pythagoras, first taught the doctrine in Greece; and as he flourished about 550 years before Christ, and Herodotus in the following century, this may account for the reserve of the historian. But it seems to be a matter of no importance, whether the doctrine was introduced from Egypt or India. The fact seems to be fully established, that nearly a uniformity of opinion, on this subject, subsisted in both countries, from the earliest authentic records in existence. Hence, the doctrine spread among the ancient Japanese, Chinese, Persians, Babylonians, and all the ancient nations, and generally obtained ascendency, in all the known world. Whether the Jews had any knowledge of this doctrine, before their mixing with the Babylonians and neighbouring nations, in their captivity, has afforded doubtful discussion among the learned, but though the doctrine might be known to them by ancient tradition and probably inferred from some parts of their

* Enfield's Hist. of Philosophy, vol. i. p. 227. † L. 2. ‡ Tusc. L. 1. s. 16.

Scriptures, yet it is no where clearly taught in any book of the Old Testament, acknowledged to be authentic. But after the Babylonian captivity, there appear manifest traces of the doctrine in their history: for among other proofs which might be adduced, the writer of the second book of the Maccabees,* says, Judas collected 200 drachms of silver, and sent to Jerusalem to make a sin offering for those who had been slain, *whereby he made reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin.*"

The doctrine of man's sinful or fallen state, and purification by moral discipline, in order to final restoration to a state of pristine happiness, seems, as far as the light of history enables us to determine, to have undergone no important change, for, at least, *two thousand years;* that is, from the time of Moses to the fifth century of the christian æra. And there is an argument in its favor which appears never to have occurred to any of my predecessors, which is this: *seeing the doctrine of final salvation was the prevalent sentiment of all the civilized world, when Christianity made its appearance, would Christ and his apostles have passed so prevalent an error, if it be one, without rebuke!* This argument must be confounding to the opposers of the doctrine.

For ages previous to the introduction of Christianity, the doctrine of the restitution had constituted the subject of the most lofty Pæans ever sung by the ancient Poets; and never did the Prince of Latin Poets feel the afflatus of inspiration more fully, than when he composed the celebrated pastoral relating to this subject, about the time of Christ's appearance. His language is so pertinent, beautiful, and elevated, that I cannot pass it unnoticed.

> Sicelides Musæ, paulo majora canamus.
> Ultima Cumæi † venit jam carminis ætas:
> Magnus ab integro sæclorum ‡ nascitur ordo.
> Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt saturnia regna;

*Chap. 2. 43—45.

†In these lines, Virgil refers to the Cumean or Sybylline verses, as authority for the doctrine. The Sybylls are described as ancient Prophetesses, who lived in virginity, and predicted many things concerning Christ. Their prophecies were held in great veneration, and it is said they were never known to fail. One of them appeared at Rome, in the reign of Tarquin, 550 years before Christ, and offered nine volumes of prophetic verses for sale; three of which were purchased, and being committed to the vigilance of fifteen men, were placed in a stone chest and secured in a vault, in the newly built Capitol at Rome. The name Sybyll is compounded of two Greek words, which signify *the counsel of God.* The writings of the Sybylls are mentioned by Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome; the last of whom, in reply to Jovinian, admits the celestial origin of their divinations.

‡The great order of ages, in which all things were to be restored, included one complete revolution of the heavenly bodies, or the great Platonic year, when all the celestial orbs should present the same aspect. The different ca-

Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto,
——— Ac toto surget gens aurea mundo.
Talia sæcla, suis dixerunt, currite, fusis
Concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcæ.

Not recollecting any thing in English, which fully expresses the spirit of the original, and unwilling to deprive the common reader of sharing, in some degree, the pleasure arising from these delightful verses, I offer the following imperfect, but Evangelical imitation:

O sacred inspiration, tune my tongue
For nobler strains, than Poets ever sung:
To tell the bliss, which Sybylls sang of old,
And Jewish Prophets, from the Lord foretold.
The heav'nly spheres their first aspect assume,
And pristine light and truth, the world illume.
Celestial Graces, now to men return,
And sacred fires, on human altars burn:
The grand Epocha, King Messiah's reign,
On earth descends, mankind their Paradise regain.
A new creation, formed in righteousness,
Their Father own, and Christ their Lord confess.
O'er all the world, the Golden Age doth rise;
All nature chang'd, the face of earth and skies
Assume eternal smiles, effulgent day
Forever shines, and chases night away.
Now human woe, of sin the consequence,
Shall cease, and bliss shall dwell with innocence.
O haste Epocha, hear the Lord's command:
"My oath I'll not revoke, my word shall stand."

The Egyptian Philosophy seems to have been brought to its perfection by Ammonius Saccas, and Origen and Plotinus his pupils, at the famous Academy of Alexandria, in Egypt, in the beginning of the third century. Ammonius was a man of great learning and liberality, who attempted a reconciliation of the Oriental, Platonic, and Egyptian Philosophy with the Christian religion.*

Ammonius supposed that true Philosophy derived its origin and its consistence from the eastern nations, that it was taught to the Egyptians, by Hermes; that it was brought from them to the Greeks, and preserved in its original purity by Plato, who was the best interpreter of Hermes and the other oriental sages. He maintained that all the different religions which prevailed in the world were, in their original integrity, conformable to this ancient philosophy; but it unfortunately happened, that the symbols and fictions under which, according to the ancient manner, the an-

culations of this period, vary from 23,760 to 49,000 solar years. The learned Joseph Scaliger has said many curious things on this subject. Canon Isagog.

* See Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. 1. p. 133—144.

cients delivered their precepts and doctrines, were in process of time erroneously understood, both by priests and people, in a literal sense; that in consequence of this, the invisible beings and dæmons whom the Supreme Deity had placed in the different parts of the universe as the ministers of his providence, were by the suggestion of superstition converted into gods, and worshipped with a multiplicity of vain ceremonies. He therefore insisted that all the religions of all nations should be restored to their primitive standard; viz. *The ancient philosophy of the east;* and he asserted that his project was agreeable to the intentions of Jesus Christ, whom he acknowledged to be a most excellent man, the friend of God; and affirmed that his sole view in descending on earth, was to set bounds to the reigning superstition, to remove the errors which had crept into the religion of all nations, but not to abolish the ancient theology from which they are derived.

Taking these principles for granted, Ammonius associated the sentiments of the Egyptians with the doctrines of Plato; and to finish this conciliatory scheme, he so interpreted the doctrines of the other philosophical and religious sects, by art, invention, and allegory, that they seemed to bear some semblance to the Egyptian and Ptatonic systems. *

As the doctrine of Ammonius, relative to the soul and man's final destiny, was adopted by Origen and others of the ancient fathers, and explained on the principles of Christianity with which it had become amalgamated, a concise view of the doctrine, taught by Origen on this subject, is here inserted, as a farther developement of the ancient Philosophy.

That there is a pre-existent state of human souls, for the nature of the soul is such as to make her capable of existing eternally, backward as well as forward, because her spiritual essence, as such, makes it impossible that she should, either through age or violence, be dissolved; so that nothing is wanting to her existence but the good pleasure from whom all things proceed. And if, according to the Platonic scheme, we assign the production of all things to the exuberant fullness of life in the Deity, which, through the blessed necessity of his communicative nature, empties itself into all possibilities of being, as into so many capable receptacles, we must suppose her existence in a sense necessary, and in a degree co-eternal with God.

That souls were condemned to animate mortal bodies, in order to expiate faults they had committed in a pre-existent state; for we may be assured, from the infinite goodness of their Creator, that they were at first joined to the purest matter, and placed in those regions of the universe which were most suitable to the purity of essence they then possessed. For that the souls of men are an order of essentially incorporate spirits, their deep immersion into terrestrial matter, the modification of all their operations

* See Buck's Theo. Dict. p. 408.

by it, and the heavenly body promised in the Gospel, as the highest perfection of our renewed nature, clearly evince. Therefore if our souls existed before they appeared inhabitants of the earth, they were placed in a purer element, and enjoyed far greater degrees of happiness. And certainly he, whose overflowing goodness brought them into existence, would not deprive them of their felicity, till by their mutability they rendered themselves less pure in the whole extent of their powers, and became disposed for the susception of such a degree of corporeal life as was exactly answerable to their present disposition of spirit. Hence it was necessary that they should become terrestrial men.

That at the resurrection of the dead we shall be clothed with etherial bodies. For the elements of our terrestrial compositions are such as almost fatally entangle us in vice, passion, and misery. The purer the vehicle the soul is united with, the more perfect is her life and operations. Besides, the Supreme Goodness who made all things, assures us he made all things best at first, and therefore his recovery of us to our lost happiness (which is the design of the Gospel) must restore us to our better bodies and happier habitations, which is evident from 1 Cor. xv. 49, 2 Cor. v. 1. and other texts of Scripture.

That, after long periods of time, the damned shall be released from their torments, and restored to a new state of probation. For the Deity has such reserves in his gracious providence, as will vindicate his sovereign goodness and wisdom from all disparagement. Expiatory pains are a part of his adorable plan; for this sharper kind of favour has a righteous place in such creatures as are by nature mutable. Though sin has extinguished or silenced the divine life, yet it has not destroyed the faculties of reason and understanding, consideration and memory, which will serve the life which is most powerful. If, therefore, the vigorous attraction of the sensual nature be abated by a ceaseless pain, these powers may resume the seeds of a better life and nature. As in the material system there is a gravitation of the less bodies towards the greater, there must of necessity be something analogous to this in the intellectual system; and since the spirits created by God are emanations and streams from his own abyss of being, and as self-existent power must needs subject all beings to itself, the Deity could not but impress upon his intimate natures and substances a central tendency towards himself; an essential principle of reunion to their great original. *

In the third century, all other sects were gradually eclipsed by the school of Ammonius, whose origin and doctrines have been considered above. This victorious sect, which was formed in Egypt, issued forth from thence with such a rapid progress, that, in a short time, it extended itself almost throughout the Roman

* See Buck's Theo. Dict. p. 421. † See Berrow's Illustration and defence of the opinions of Origen, 4 to.

empire, and drew into its *vortex* the greatest part of those who applied themselves, through inclination, to the study of philosophy. This amazing progress was due to Plotinus, the most eminent disciple of Ammonius, a man of a most subtile invention, and endowed by nature with a genius capable of the most profound researches, and equal to the investigation of the most abstruse and difficult subjects. This penetrating and sublime Philosopher taught publicly first in Persia, and afterwards at Rome, and in Campania; in all which places the youth flocked in crowds to receive his instruction. He comprehended the precepts of his philosophy in several books, the most of which are yet extant.

The number of disciples that were formed in the school of Plotinus is almost beyond credibility. The most famous of them was Porphyry, who spread abroad through Sicily and many other countries the doctrine of his master, revised with great accuracy, adorned with the graces of a flowing and elegant style, and enriched with new inventions and curious improvements. From the time of Ammonius until the sixth century, this was almost the only system of philosophy that was publicly taught at Alexandria. A certain philosopher, whose name was Plutarch, having learned it there, brought it into Greece, and renewed, at Athens, the celebrated *academy*, from whence issued a set of illustrious philosophers.*

In the fifth century, the credit of the Platonic philosophy, and the preference that was given to it, as more excellent in itself, and less repugnant to the genius of the gospel than other systems, did not prevent the doctrine of Aristotle from coming to light after a long struggle, and forcing its way into the Christian church. The Platonists themselves interpreted, in their schools, some of the writings of Aristotle, particularly his Dialects, and recommended that work to such of the youth as had a taste for logical discussions, and were fond of disputing. In this the Christian doctors imitated the manner of the heathen schools, and this was the first step to that universal dominion, which the Stagirite afterwards obtained in the republic of letters. A second and a yet larger stride, which the Aristotelian philosophy made towards this universal empire, was during the controversies which Origen had occasioned, and the Arian, Eutychian, Nestorian, and Pelagian dissentions. Origen, as is well known, was zealously attached to the Platonic system. When therefore he was publicly condemned, many to avoid the imputation of his errors, and to prevent their being counted among the number of his followers, adopted openly the philosophy of Aristotle, which was entirely different from that of Origen. The Nestorian, Arian, and Eutychian controversies were managed, or rather drawn out, on both sides, by a perpetual recourse to subtle distinctions, and captious sophisms. And no philosophy was so proper to furnish such wea-

* See Mosheim, p. 205.

pons as that of Aristotle; for that of Plato was far from being adapted to form the minds to the polemic arts. Beside, the Pelagian doctrine bore a striking resemblance to the Platonic opinions concerning God and the human soul, and this was an additional reason which engaged many to desert the Platonists, and to assume, at least, the name of Peripatetics.*

The vices of the clergy were now carried to the most enormous lengths; and all the writers of this century, whose probity and virtue render them worthy of credit, are unanimous in their accounts of the luxury, arrogance, avarice, and voluptuousness of the sacerdotal orders. †

These approbrious stains, in the characters of the clergy, would never have been endured, had not the greatest part of mankind been sunk in superstition and ignorance, and all in general formed their ideas of the rights and liberties of Christian ministers, from the model exhibited by the sacerdotal orders among the Hebrews, the Greeks, and Romans, during the law of Moses, and the darkness of Paganism.‡

As there were none in these times to hinder the Christians from retaining the opinions of their pagan ancestors concerning departed souls, heroes, demons, temples, and such like matters, and even transferring them into their religious services; and as, instead of entirely abolishing the rites and institutions of ancient times, these institutions were still observed with only some slight alterations; all this swelled of necessity the torrent of superstition, and deformed the beauty of the Christian religion and worship with those corrupt remains of paganism, which still subsist in the Christian church, and the famous pagan doctrine, concerning the *purification of departed souls*, was *new modelled* and proved an inexhaustible source of riches to the clergy through the succeeding ages, and still enriches the Romish church with its nutritious streams. ‖

In the sixth century, a vast multitude of Jews were added to the church, through the means of the Emperor Justinian, the zeal of the Gallic and Spanish Monarchs, and the efforts of Gregory the Great. The narrow views of this nation joined to Austin's rigid views of particular election, had a darkening effect on the Christian religion; and mightily tended to obliterate the remains of the Ancient Philisophy. Hence Partiality, joined to Gothic ignorance, paved the way for the Orthodox and Mahometan hell, and blackened the fair heavens of religion and literature.

Not to speak of the *illiberal ignorance* which several prelates affected, and which they injudiciously confounded with *Christian simplicity*; even those who applied themselves to the study and propagation of the sciences, were for the most part extremely unskilful and illiterate; and the branches of learning taught in the schools, were inconsiderable both as to their quality and their

*See Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. p 345. †p. 351. ‡ p. 352. ‖p. 358.

number. Greek literature was almost every where neglected; and those who by profession had devoted themselves to the culture of Latin erudition, spent their time and labor in grammatical subtilties and quibbles, as the pedantic examples of Isodorus and Cassiodorus abundantly show. Eloquence was degraded into a rhetorical bombast, a noisy kind of declamation, which was composed of motley and frigid allegories and barbarous terms, as may even appear from several parts of the writings of those superior geniuses who surpassed their cotemporaries in precision and elegance, such as Boethius, Cassiodorus, Ennodius, and others. As to the other liberal arts, they shared the common calamity; and as they were now cultivated, had nothing very liberal or elegant in their appearance, consisting entirely in a few dry rules; which, instead of a complete and finished system, produced only a ghastly and lifeless skeleton.

Philosophy fared still worse than literature; for it was entirely banished from all the seminaries which were under the inspection and government of the ecclesiastical order. The greatest part of these zealots looked upon the study of philosophy not only as useless, but even pernicious to those who had dedicated themselves to the service of religion.

In the beginning of this century, the Platonics maintained as yet their credit, and their philosophy was in vogue. The Alexandrian and Athenian schools flourished under the direction of Demascius, Isidorus, Simplicius, Eulamius, Hermias, Priscianus, and others, who were placed on the highest summit of literary glory. But when the Emperor Justinian, by a particular edict, prohibited the teaching of philosophy at Athens, which edict, no doubt, was levelled at the modern Platonism already mentioned, and when his resentment began to flame out against those who refused to abandon the pagan worship, then all these celebrated philosophers took refuge among the Persians, who were at that time the enemies of Rome. They indeed returned from their voluntary exile, when the peace was concluded between the Persians and Romans, A. D. 533; but they could never recover their former credit, and they gradually disappeared in the public schools and seminaries of learning, which ceased at length to be under their direction. Thus expired that famous sect, which was distinguished by the title of the modern or later Platonic. It was succeeded by the Aristotelian philosophy, which arose imperceptibly out of its obscurity. *

Some eminent writers believe the Ancient Philosophy was derived from the Patriarchs and Jewish nation, and allege many specious arguments; but it seems more rational to carry back its origin to the traditions of the Antideluvian world. For the sake of impartiality on this subject, we give place to the following brief statement.

* See Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. p. 406—8.

Clemens Alexandrinus, Justin Martyr, Augustine, and most of the Christian fathers, believed the Heathens derived their proper sentiments from the oracles of God, and Celsus, the Heathen philosopher, acknowledges the similarity of Plato to Moses and the prophets. Theophilus Gale, in his *Court of the Gentiles*, has with great labor, shown the derivation of the sensible notions of the Heathen from the oracles of God. Nothing is more plain, than that the nations which have had no access to revelation are almost similar to brutes in ignorance and barbarity. Let the south of Africa, the east of Tartary, and various parts of America, bear witness. It is easy to trace their access to revelation, wherever any sensible philosophy, especially respecting morals and worship, was found. Might not a deal of traditional knowledge be derived from Noah? Who knows how little real wisdom the Egyptians might have, except what they owed to Joseph, Moses, Solomon, or other Hebrews, they were conversant with, and highly regarded? What hindered the Chaldeans to learn not a little from Abraham, their countryman; or from Jewish captives, carried thither by the Assyrians or Nebuchadnezzar; or from their countrymen, the most ancient Samaritans? What know we, but any thing sensible in the ancient Persian religion, is owing to Zoroaster, who had access to learn it from the Jews, if he was not, as some think, a renegade one himself! It is certain, that neither the ancient Chinese philosophy of Confucius, nor their modern, had half the sensibleness that some pretend; but though it had, how easy to derive it from revelation? If Noah went thither, and settled their constitutions, they must have been originally good. Probably thousands of Jews removed eastward, when Oguz-kan the Tartar made his irruption into Western Asia; and about the same time, founded a kingdom on the northwest of China; and from their acute apprehensions of certain doctrines, and other things, we cannot but think that some such thing happened. I find no evidence of any sensible philosophy in the East Indies, till after the time in which it is said Nebuchadnezzar transported thither a colony of Jews: nay, nor till after they had access to converse with Jews in the empire of Darius, the husband of Esther; and to whom Mordecai, a Jew, was for a while chief Minister of state; and till after almost all the east sounded with the wisdom of Daniel the Jew. To turn our eyes towards Europe, where was the learning of Greece, before Cadmus, a fugitive from the country of Israel carried letters thither? How probable, that Orpheus the reformer of their religion, or his father, was a Phenician, and his mother, Calliope, perhaps a Jewish minstrel, carried northward by the conquering Shishak king of Egypt? What know I, but the Colchians on the east of the Euxine sea, with whom the Greeks had the earliest intercourse, and who used circumcision, and had a language not a little similar to the Hebrew, were a colony of Jews and Egyptians, left there by

Shishak, as he hasted home to check his rebellious brother? Who has not heard of the early intercourse between Egypt and Greece? Who knows not, that the Phenicians, who in a manner lived among the Hebrews, or at their side by their extensive sea-trade and numerous colonies, might propogate hints borrowed from revelation, far and wide, even to the Celtæ of Britain? Who may not observe in the Etruscan incumonies of Italy, not a little resemblance to the early order of the Hebrew tribes? Were not Pherecydes the Syrian, and Thales the Milesian, the most ancient philosophers of the Greeks? and were they not born, especially the first at no great distance from Israel? Did not Pythagoras, Solon, Plato, and other renowned philosophers, travel into Egypt and Chaldea, to collect wisdom? and could they do so without visiting the Jewish valley of vision, which lay in their way, from the one to the other? Did not the Romans derive their philosophy from the Greeks? and had they not plenty of access to the oracles of God in the Grecian language? Since it is so extremely probable that almost every thing sensible in the Pagan learning derives its original from revelation, how superlatively unmanly must it be for our modern infidels, to boast of their own or the Heathen science, in opposition to the gospel of Christ?*

I have said in my first lecture on the Trinity, that from the fifth to the fifteenth century, the powers of Antichrist enjoyed their Millennium; and this may certainly be as well applied to the fate of the doctrine of the Divine benevolence, as that of the Divine Unity. Here the intelligent reader will perceive the propriety of holding the Unity, as clear as the benevolence of God: for the latter doctrine was never lost among Christians, till the Divine Unity was denied, and polytheism established as the basis of the religion of Jesus. Then the notions of Gods passionate unjust, whose attributes were rage, revenge or lust, opened a gulf in which was buried the fair fabric of heaven-born religion, which represented God a Universal Father, and all mankind his children, by eternal and indissoluble ties. Indeed the Orthodox had been so habituated to curse their follow christians, during the fourth and fifth centuries, that to denounce the most horrid excerations on those, *who* objected to the base innovations of the times, was as familliar to the mouth of an Ecclesiastic, as to invoke benedictions on his partisans. In such a state of affairs we cannot be surprised, that an eternal hell should originate in the frantic imaginations of the degenerate Christians. If we are asked, therefore, when the doctrine of endless misery appeared in the world, we answer. It was cradled in the dark night of superstitious monstrosity and delusion, when the Barbarians had overrun the seat of Empire, of Christianity, and of science and a flood of polytheism, wickedness, and barbarity, had been poured out on the apostate church of Christ. Every honest Historian must admit,

*Brown's Dict. of the Bible, Article, Philosophy.

that the violence of those professing christians, who introduced polytheism, in the fourth, and endless misery in the fifth century, exceeded, in ruthless ferocity, any thing recorded in the annals of the Pagan world! Let then the thoughts and deeds of the dark ages pass unnoticed, in the christian history, for scarcely any act or production of the Christian church from the fifth to the fifteenth century is worthy the attention of the christian or scholar.

We have been rather prolix, in our account of the doctrine of the Restoration; but our object has been to show the Universality of the doctrine, with a view to rebut an ignorant pretence made by its opposers, namely: That it is a novel doctrine, never known till of late. It ever has been the most popular doctrine in the world, from its foundation till the present time; and it is utterly beyond the power of the Historian, to point out any period in the annals of civilized nations, in which this doctrine has not been paramount to all other views of a future state. We admit, that from the overthrow of the Platonic Philosophy, in the sixth century, till after the revival of literature, in the sixteenth, the doctrine was at a low ebb in Europe—but who cannot see it disfigured in the Catholic Purgatory; so that it has ever been prevalent.

At the reformation, some of the Protestants, carried beyond the bounds of moderation in overheated zeal against the Roman Church, labored with all their might to destroy the Catholic Purgatory, though the whole legion of Protestant writers, were never able to produce one solid argument against it, either from Scripture or Philosophy. But as soon as sectarian enthusiasm began to subside, the Protestants began to look again towards this ornament of every theological system in the world; and as soon as tolerant views began to dawn on the reformed church, some of her most eminent sons stood forth as Champions, in the cause of human emancipation.

Since that time, the doctrine of the *final Restoration*, has had a train of able and distinguished advocates, who have repulsed with success the progress of the base upstart, *endless misery*. The most distinguished writers in favor of Restoration, are Hartley, Stonehouse, Smith, Estlin, Winchester and Chauncey: all of whom are authors of excellent talents and good education.

A few of the arguments made use of, in defence of this system, are as follow: Christ died not for a select number of men only, but for mankind *universally*, and without exception or limitation.

For the sacred writers are singularly emphatical in expressing this truth. They speak not only of Christ's '*dying for us*,' '*for our sins*,' '*for sinners*,' '*for the ungodly*,' '*for the unjust;*' but affirm, in yet more extensive terms, that, that '*he died for the world*,' for '*the whole world.*' *

If Christ died for all, it is far more reasonable to believe, that

* See 1 Thess. v. 10 1 Cor. xv. 3. Rom. v. 6, 8. 1. Pet. iii. 18, John i. 29; iii. 16, 17. 1 John ii. 2. Heb. ii. 9; and a variety of other passages.

the whole human kind, in consequence of his death, will finally be saved, than that the greatest part of them should perish. More honour is hereby reflected on God; greater virtue is attributed to the blood of Christ shed on the cross; and instead of dying in vain, as to any real good, which will finally be the event, with respect to the greatest part of mankind, he will be made to die to the best and noblest purpose, even the eternal happiness of a whole world of intelligent and moral beings.

It is the purpose of God, according to his good pleasure, that mankind *universally*, in consequence of the death of his Son Jesus Christ, shall certainly and finally be saved. The texts, which ascertain this, are those, which follow: First, Rom. v. 12, to the end. There Adam is considered as the source of damage to mankind universally; and Christ, on the other hand, as a like source of advantage to the same mankind; but with this observable difference, that the advantage on the side of Christ exceeds, overflows, abounds, beyond the damage on the side of Adam; and this to all mankind. The 15th 16th and 17th verses, are absolutely unintelligible upon any other interpretation.

Another text, to the purpose of our present argument, we meet with in Rom. viii. from the 19th to the 24th verse. On the one hand, it is affirmed of the creature, that is, of mankind in general, that they are subjected to vanity, that is, the imperfections and infelicities of a vain, mortal life, here on earth. On the other hand, it is positively affirmed of the creature, or mankind in general, that they were not subjected to this vanity, finally and forever, but in consequence of hope; not only that they should be delivered from this subjection but instated in immortal glory.

Another text to this purpose occurs in Col. i. 19, 20. *For it pleased, the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell; "and (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself.* And in this epistle, * the apostle (speaking of Christ) says, *In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;* that is he is the glorious person, in whom God has really lodged, and through whom he will actually communicate all the fullness, wherewith he intends this lapsed world shall be filled in order to its restoration. And Christ, having this fulness lodged in him, *ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.* † And as the filling of all things in this lapsed world, that they might be restored, was the final cause of the ascension of Christ up to heaven, all things must accordingly be filled in fact by him, sooner or later; the apostles therefore observes in the following verses not only that he has imparted gifts in prosecution of the end of his exaltation, but that in order to the full accomplishment of it, he would go on to impart them, *until we all come to the unity of the faith, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* And it is declared, ‡ that all things in heaven and

* Chapter ii. verse 9. † Ephes. iv. 10. ‡ Ephes. i. 9, 10.

earth shall be reduced from the state they were in, by means of the lapse, into a well subjected and subordinate whole by Christ. Another proof of the present proposition we find in 1 Tim. ii. 4. If God is able in consistency with men's make, as moral and intelligent agents, to effect their salvation, his desiring that they should be saved, and his eventually saving them, are convertable terms.

As a mean in order to men's being made meet for salvation, God will sooner or later, in this state or another, reduce them all under a willing and obedient subjection to his moral government.

The texts which confirm this proposition are numerous. The apostle says. * *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* If all things, without any limitation or exception, shall be brought under subjection to Christ, then the time must come, sooner or later, in this state or some other, when there shall be no rebels among the sons of Adam, no enemies against the moral government of God: for there is no way of reducing rebels, so as to destroy their character as such, but by making them willing and obedient subjects. That this scripture is thus to be understood is evident by a parallel passage. † The next portion of scripture, in proof of the present proposition, we meet with in 1 Cor. chap. xv. from the 24th to the 28th verse. Though the apostle, in this paragraph, turns our view to the end of the mediatory scheme, it is affirmed, that universal subjection to Christ shall first be effected, in a variety of as strong and extensive terms, as could well have been used: as, by '*putting down all rule, and all authority and power;*' by '*putting all enemies under his feet,*' &c. It is worthy of special notice, that, before Christ's delivery of the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, *the last enemy must be destroyed, which is death.*

The two periods, when the mediatory kingdom is in the hands of Jesus Christ, and when God, as king, will be immediately all in all, are certainly quite distinct from each other: and the reign of Christ, in his mediatorial kingdom, may be divided into two general periods. The one takes in this present state of existence, in which Christ reigns at the head of God's kingdom of grace. During this period a number of the sons of Adam will be fitted for a glorious immortality in the next state. The other period of Christ's reign is that which intervenes between the general resurrection and the time when God shall be *all in all.* This state may contain a duration of so long countinuance, as to answer to the scripture phrase, for ever and ever, or as it might more properly be rendered *for ages of ages.* During the whole of this state the righteous shall be happy, and the wicked miserable, till they are reduced, as willing servants to Christ, then the grand period shall commence, when God shall be *all in all.* ‡

* 1 John 3. 8. Psa. viii. 5, 6, as explained and argued from Heb. ii. 6. †Pilip. ii. 9—11 ‡Chauncey's Salv. of all men, p. 12, 20, 31, 117, 123.

Universalian Redemptionists, believe an expiatory sacrifice and satisfaction was made by Jesus, in the character of God-man or God incarnate, as the head and representative of the whole human race; and that, on this account, all men are accepted as righteous in the sight of God, and consequently must be saved from wrath to come. This view of Universalism was first promulgated in England, by James Relly, and introduced into America by Mr. Murray, about the time of the commencement of the American revolution.

Mr. Relly believed that Christ as a Mediator was so united to mankind, that his actions were theirs, his obedience and sufferings theirs; and, consequently, that he has as fully restored the whole human race to the divine favor, as if all had obeyed and suffered in their own persons: and upon this persuasion he preached a finished salvation, called by the apostle Jude, "The common salvation." His followers believe that the divine law has now no demands upon them, nor condemning power over them. Their salvation solely depends upon their union with Christ, which God constituted and established before the world began; and by virtue of this union they will all be admitted to heaven at the last day. They allege that the union of Christ and his church is a necessary consideration for the right explanation of certain passages of Scripture.*

The Scriptures affirm, that *by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation.* † It is evident hence, that in Adam's offence all have offended; which supposes such a union between Adam and his offspring, that his sin was their sin, and his ruin their ruin: and if this be granted, why should it be thought a thing incredible, that the like union, subsisting between Jesus and his seed, should render his condition theirs? especially as the apostle has thus stated the matter. ‡

To prove that the atonement was satisfactory for the whole human race, they allege that it is said, "Christ died for all;" that "he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." This denomination admits of no punishment for sin but what Christ suffered: but speak of a punishment, which is consequent upon sin, as darkness, distress, and misery, which they assert are ever attendant upon transgression. But, as *to know the true God and Jesus Christ is life eternal,* and as *all shall know him from the least to the greatest,* that knowedge, or belief, will consequently dispel or save from all the darkness, distress and fear, which is attendant upon guilt and unbelief, and being perfectly holy, we shall consequently be perfectly and eternally happy.

They are not observers of ordinances, such as water-baptism

*Eph. v. 30. 1 Cor. xii. 26; xii. 12. See also Col. i. 18. Eph. i. 22, 23. Col. ii. 10. Rom. xii. 5. Heb. ii. 11. John xvii. 22, 24. †Rom. v. 8; iii. 25. ‡ Rom v. 19.

and the sacrament: professing to believe only in one baptism, which they call an immersion of the mind or conscience into truth by the teaching of the spirit of God; and by the same spirit they are enabled to feed on Christ as the bread of life, professing that in and with Jesus they possess all things. They inculcate and maintain good works for necessary purposes; but contend that the principal and only works which ought to be attended to, is the doing real good without religious ostentation; that to relieve the miseries and distresses of mankind according to our ability, is doing more real good than the superstitious observance of religious ceremonies. In general they appear to believe that there will be a resurrection to life, and a resurrection to condemnation; that believers only will be among the former, who as first fruits, and kings and priests, will have part in the first resurrection, and shall reign with Christ in his kingdom of the millennium; that unbelievers who are after raised, must wait the manifestation of the Saviour of the world, under that condemnation of conscience which a mind in darkness and wrath must necessarily feel; that believers, called kings and priests, will be made the medium of communication to their condemned brethren; and like Joseph to his brethren, though he spoke roughly to them, in reality overflowed with affection and tenderness; that ultimately every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that in the Lord they have righteousness and strength; and thus every enemy shall be subdued to the kingdom and glory of the Great Mediator.*

The late Dr. Joseph Huntington, in a posthumous work, entitled, "Calvinism Improved; or, The Gospel Illustrated as a System of Real Grace, issuing in the Salvation of all Men," has offered a new modification of Relly's scheme. The author of this performance supposes the atonement to be "a direct, true, and proper setting all our guilt to the account of Christ, as our federal head and sponsor; and alike placing his obedience to death to our account." "The Son of man," says he, "is God's only object, as an elect head, in regard to our eternal salvation, and all human nature is one entire, elect object, in union with Christ, as a body with a head." Agreeable to this idea, Dr. Huntington maintains, that our sins are transferred to Christ, and his righteousness to us, that *he was a true and proper substitute for all mankind*, and has procured *unconditional, eternal salvation, for every individual;* that the gospel is all mere *news, good news*, and hath no threatenings in it: that law and gospel are diametrically opposite; that these two dispensations of God oppose each other from beginning to end. "The moral law," says he, "every where speaks to man in his own personal character, the Gospel in that of the Messiah. The law informs us what man in justice deserves, the Gospel what the Son of God deserves." Accordingly Dr. Huntington understands all the threatenings in the word of God as

* See Buck article Relleyanist.

the pure voice of law and justice. Thus he explains Matt. xxv. 46, "Mankind in this passage are considered in two characters: in their own personally; and then the voice of the righteous law is, *These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but* [in Christ] *the righteous* [by union of faith] *shall enter into life eternal.* The wicked character shall remain an everlasting object of shame, contempt and condemnation, in the view of God and holy intelligencies; the righteous character an eternal object of approbation, worthy of life eternal."*

Unitarian Universalists.—I use the term Unitarian, as implying a believer in one God and one Mediator, as described in the writings of Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham, whose views are delineated in my Lectures. † Hence, Unitarian Universalism is a belief in full and eternal salvation, by the free, sovereign, and unpurchased benevolence of the Deity, excluding all notions of merit, arising either from works of righteousness or vicarious sufferings. Salvation, in this sense, is that pure, blessed state of immortality, which God freely bestows, at the resurrection, on all mankind, through Christ our Lord.

According to this scheme Universalists believe God to be the same just, kind, merciful, and propitious Being, from eternity unto eternity, without the least "variableness or shadow of turning." That he created only to bless and make happy in the enjoyment of himself, in a greater or less degree, according to the capacity of his creatures. That he never stood in need of any to suffer in order to appease his wrath, or to open a way whereby it could be consistent for him to be gracious; as he never was ungracious, neither was it ever inconsistent for him to be merciful. That the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ, embracing his life, miracles, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension into glory, was a commendation of divine love;‡ and therefore could not have been designed to *procure* that of which it was a *commendation;* i. e. *the love of God to sinners.* That natural death, although it may be, and often is, occasioned by sin, yet it is not the effect of sin, nor is it a penalty due to transgression; but is the natutral effect of a mortal constitution, in which man stood, even before he sinned. That the death which is the "wages of sin," is *moral,* in which state all sinners are now supposed to be, until they are quickened and made alive by the Gospel, i. e. by the life-giving power of Divine truth; hence the Gospel was designed to save sinners from a state which they are now in; (i. e. from their sins;) and not from any punishment due to their sins, and much less, from divine justice or any supposed wrath in God. That the creature man, being thus made subject to vanity, *shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God: and that in the resurrection, they are the children of*

* See Adam's Dict. article Universalist. † See Lectures 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, and 13, of Systemmatical Theology. ‡ Rom. 5. 8.

God, being children of the resurrection. And that, as God will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth; as he sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world; so they believe *in the salvation of all men.**

Having exhibited this concise, and I hope, complete view of the whole theory of Universalism in all its different branches and progress; and having informed the reader, that I advanced from the doctrine of Restoration to Unitarian Universalism, at Philadelphia, about the beginning of the year 1823; nothing remains but to assign my reasons for rejecting the *first* and *second*, and adopting the *third scheme of Universalism.* This I shall do as briefly as possible, and then conclude my Memoir, by a general view of the *Christian Doctrine*, as taught in the sacred book of the New Testament; and which as a Unitarian Universalist, I cordially believe.

The end contemplated, in the doctrine of restoration, being the perfect purity and happiness of all intelligent beings is that to which all unperverted reason, philosophy, and revelation direct the human mind; but the means, by which the end is attained, seems not to be understood by the advocates of the doctrine. The restitution has generally been connected with the Metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, and seems not to have been separated from that doctrine for the space of 3000 years; that is, from the days of Abraham till the fifth century; and the distinction appears to have been effected only among Christians, especially since the reformation. But instead of improving the doctrine it has been unnecessarily embarrassed, by modern appendages. Both *transmigration* and *restoration* are founded on facts, which are allegorically represented, according to the eastern custom. They seem to be a vitiated representation of that glorious doctrine, first taught to mankind, by the great Parent of the Universe; and more fully illustrated and confirmed, by Christ and his apostles, where they describe the first state of man as earthly and sensual, and the second as heavenly and spiritual.

Man being made subject to vanity, while in the earthly body, must groan being burdened: but when the soul is delivered from the bondage of corruption, freed from this vile body, and clothed with a celestial and spiritual, it will then attain purity and happiness, To a scholar of sufficient classical discernment, this view of the subject will appear through the veil of metaphor and allegory, under which the eastern nations were accustomed to deliver instructions. One of the Latin Poets must have had some idea of the true doctrine, when he said,

——— Dicique beatus ante obitum nemo.——*Ovid.* ‡

*Eph. i 9. and ii. 1, 4, 5. Rom. viii. 20. 1 Tim. ii. 4. Col. i. 20.

‡ "No man can be happy before death."

Bellamy thinks "the Brahmans do not teach the transmigration of the soul, from one material body to another material body in this world; a doctrine they have been charged with by many writers. But such writers forget that the apostle informs us, there are two bodies, viz: 'there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body, howbeit, that was not first, which is spiritual, but that which is natural.' They also should have recollected, that it is said, 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,' and that the apostle says, 'absent from the body, present with the Lord;' consequently, that the *future bodies*, mentioned in the ancient book of Menu, referred to the self-same body alluded to by the apostle, and not to material bodies, of different shapes in this world. I believe the true understanding of an enlightened Brahman, on this subject to be consistent with the sacred Scriptures, and that it was originally taken from them, where the prophet says, clean and unclean beasts were figured before him on the wall in the chamber of imagery, to signify to him the good and evil affections of the Jews." *

All antiquity has practised the emblematical method of instruction, and the *metempsychosis* and *purification by pain*, is only a figurative representation of the apostolic doctrine. Hence, the believers of restoration should be willing to resign the *allegorical* for the *literal* description; and joyfully accept *a full and divine declarvtion of fact*, instead of *allusive representations*, *under eastern metaphors:* and as the doctrine of restoration involves that of *future retribution* and *expiation of sin*, by corporeal punishment, which is incompatible with the evangelical doctrine of *salvation by grace*, this method of proving the salvation of all men, has been deservedly abandoned, by the great body of Universalists, in America; and, I believe, clearly disproved in my lecture on "Hell destroyed."†

The means proposed by the *Universalian Redemptionists* are equally illusive. The supposition of *Christ's Deity*, I have eternally refuted. in my lecture on that subject; and that he never made any expiatory sacrifice, is as manifest, from my lecture on the *Mediatorial office.*‡ Consequently, the means proposed by this scheme, entirely fail to effect the end; and are completely demolished, by the overthrow of the absurd, heathen, and anti scriptural doctrine of divine incarnations.

The words *restoration*, *restitution*, must convey to the mind of every intelligent man, the notion of restoring men to a state of pristine favor, purity, and happiness, which no sensible or well instructed Universalist believes; and which every well informed Christian must disbelieve—for the Scriptures positively declare, that *the first state of existence was not spiritual but natural, and af-*

* See Bellamy's Hist. of all Relig. p. 128. † See "Systematical Theology," Balfour's Inquiry, and Kneeland's Lectures. ‡ See "Systematical Theology," part third, Lectures 10, 11, 12 and 13.

terwards that which is spiritual. * This plain refutation of this fundamental mistake, in the Pythagorian Philosophy, should induce all, who profess adherence to the Scriptures, to reject, without delay, the absurd notions of pre-existent-human spirits offending before they were in earthly bodies; and the equally absurd opinion of mankind being created pure and happy in Adam, and sinning before they had existence. But as soon as these anti-scriptural and irrational notions, together with the heathen fancies of angry and passionate gods, are expelled from the minds of Christians, *Universalian Restorationists* and *Universalian Redemptionists*, will cease to have an existence, in the religious world.

The doctrine of *salvation by grace*, seems not to have been amalgamated with proper Unitarianism, from the apostolic age till the beginning of the present century. That the constituent parts of the system have always had a public reception and divine sanction, cannot be denied by any well informed Christian. Nothing is plainer in Scripture than the declarations of Moses, Jonah, and Paul, that *salvation is of the Lord*,† and *by grace ye are saved.* ‡ In relation to the divine unity, the Scriptures are equally as express. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.*‖ *To us there is but one God, even the Father, one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in all.* § The present system of Universalism owes its organization to the Rev. Hosea Ballou, and the Rev. Abner Kneeland. "A treatise on Atonement," by the former, and LECTURES, by the latter, first published about the year 1805, formed the basis of the system, which has been illustrated, explained, and confirmed, in Ballou's "Lecture Sermons," Kneeland's Lectures, my "Systematical Theology," and Balfour's Inquiry. A careful perusal of these four volumes, will suffice to give a clear view of the system, and arguments by which it is supported and established.

During the last five years, the system has rapidly progressed towards perfection, in symmetry, beauty and influence. To this event, several well conducted periodical papers greatly contibuted. The first periodical paper, entitled the "Gospel Visitant," commenced in 1817, but could scarcely then obtain support. In 1819, commenced the Boston "Universalist Magazine," which has progressed to the seventh volume; and still continues to effect much for the growing cause. The next year, began the "Christian Messenger," (afterwards the "Philadelphia Universalist Magazine,") in which the doctrine is largely and freely discussed: and about the same time, the "Gospel Herald," at New-York, which has contributed much to the support and dissemination of the doctrine. In 1821, two other periodical papers, "Christian Intelligencer" and "Religious Inquirer," made their appearance, the first is published at Portland, Maine, and the

*1 Cor. 15. 46. † Deut. 33. 29; Jonah 2. 9. ‡ Eph. 2. 5; Tit. 2. 11 and 3. 7. ‖ Deut. 6. 4; Mark 12. 29. § 1 Cor. 8. 5, Eph. 4. 6.

latter, at Hartford, Connecticut. These have also been useful and successful auxiliaries to the cause of truth. In the western section of this state, much has been done by the circulation of the "Gospel Advocate."

A very considerable uniformity of opinion now prevails, throughout the whole connexion of professing Universalists. As far as has been known, all Universalist ministers believe the doctrine of the Divine Unity, and the Trinity is completely exploded from the connexion. Salvation as *the gift of God*, without allusion to works of righteousness or vicarious sufferings, is now re-echoed from almost every pulpit belonging to the denomination. The number of the Universalist Clergy, in the United States, holding fellowship with the different Associations, is about 150; and the number of societies about 300. In the State of New-York, there are one "Universalist Convention" of the State, and seven Associations, namely: the *Western*, *Genesee*, *Cayuga*, *Black River*, *Chenango*, *Hudson River*, and *Chatauque*. Each Association consists of all the Ministers, and *two delegates* from each society within its boundary, besides the *Visiting Committees* from the neighbouring Associations: the Ministers and Delegates constitute the Council of the Association, in which all subjects are determined by a majority of votes. The Council of the Convention consists solely of Ministers, delegated from the different Associations. Hence, the discipline is almost completely *Presbyterian*, as *appeals* may be carried from Societies or Churches, to the Associations, and from the Associations to the *Convention*. In New-England there are *five Associations* and one *General Convention*. Universalists are rapidly increasing in Ohio, where they have also formed an Association, which bids fair to grow and prosper. Universalism is also making its way into Pennsylvania, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Indiana. Truly the harvest is great, but the laborers are few; may the Lord, who gave the word, increase the number of them who publish salvation, and say unto Zion, thy God reigneth.—Amen.*

*While we thus pray for the increase of public advocates of the doctrine, we as earnestly pray, that none may enter its ministry, who are not duly qualified *to feed the people with knowledge and understanding*. As Universalism does not address itself to the passions, but to the understanding of men, we would sincerely request all candidates for the Pastoral office, to make themselves worthy the character of a good English scholar, and well acquainted with the doctrine, before they attempt to become its advocates: and let not one be ordained a minister, in the connexion, till he become intimately acquainted with Ecclesiastical History, and the Greek Testament.

GENERAL VIEW

OF THE

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

1. There is One Undivided, Invisible, and Eternal Lord God, subsisting in *One Person*, Self-existent, Omnipresent, All-controlling, Uncontrolled, Sole Creator, Proprietor, and Governor of the Universe, who is Infinite and Unchangeable, in Power, Wisdom and Goodness: and this Eternal Being, who alone possesses Immortality, known to the Jewish nation, as the God of Abraham, and to the Christians, as the Lord God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the only object of religious worship, reverence, and adoration.

2. As God is Infinite in Power, he is capable of doing, whatever his Infinite Wisdom sees fit to be done. Hence, whatever he wills to be done, must inevitably come to pass; because Eternal wisdom could not devise what would be improper to be executed; and seeing Infinite Power cannot be resisted, Jehovah's counsel must stand, and he will do all his pleasure.

3. The Eternal Spirit being Infinite and Unchangeable in Wisdom, knew from all eternity whatsoever should come to pass; therefore, every action and every event must inevitably take place, in that very order and manner in which it subsisted in the Eternal Foreknowledge of the Deity: neither can the number of events be augmented or diminished, nor the causes, motives, or instruments, varied from the plan which Infinite Wisdom surveyed from all Eternity.*

4. Jehovah being Infinite and Unchangeable in Goodness, can never become better nor worse than he has been throughout all eternity. Hence, all notions of Expiatory sacrifices as means of placating the Deity, are eternally useles and unnecessary; for if God ever needed a placatory atonement, he must eternally require one, because he is unchangeable; but if he were eternally and unchangeably good, he never required such sacrifices, nor means of placation: consequently, all suppositions of salvation or deliverance from the demands of Infinite Justice, or the influence of any principle or attribute of Deity, are inconsistent with correct views of God's perfections, and therefore, both false and absurd.†

* For illustration and demonstration of these three Articles, see my Systematical Theology, Lectures second and third.

† See Lectures 6 and 12, Systematical Theology.

5. The Eternal has not only exhibited his being and perfections, in the works of Creation and Providence, so clearly, that all Atheism and Infidelity are left without excuse,* but he has, moreover, given, in the Mosaic and Christian Dispensations, a full, perspicuous, consistent, and intelligible Revelation of his Will, Purposes, and Favor to Mankind, relative to all things that concern their spiritual well-being and happiness in time and eternity: and he has also attested the claims of this Revelation to celestial origin, by so unequivocal signs and evidences, that none but the stubbornly rebellious, or absolutely indifferent, can remain in doubt or dissatisfaction.†

6. In this blessed system of Divine truth, are clearly revealed, the unchangeable relationship of mankind, universally and indiscriminately, to God as an impartial and loving Father;‡ their ceaseless existence and well-being under his benevolent administration; the ways of virtue leading to happiness, and the bye-paths of vice, beset with snares and misery, and so distinctly marked, that the way-faring man may not err therein; the imperfections and infirmities of the earthly nature,‖ operating as causes which produce and continue moral turpitude, sorrow, and death, fully develloped; the termination of vice, pain, and misery, gloriously announced; and the whole scene closed by the regeneration of all sinful intelligences, in the knowledge, love, holiness, and beatitude of the Deity, to spend an endless eternity in celestial brotherhood, illumed and beatified by the presence and glory of an approving God.§

7. For the management of that divine economy which Infinite Wisdom has appointed for the discipline and instruction of mankind, it pleased the Eternal Father to select Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph and Mary ¶ by natural aud ordinary generation, and a descendant of the family of David, who lived in the reign of Augustus Cesar, the Roman Governor, and at the age of thirty years, supernaturally to qualify him to be a Prince, Prophet, and Saviour of mankind, who being endowed with the Holy Spirit, in a higher degree than ever was communicated to any other man,** led a holy, harmless, and spotless life, set us an example of perfect morality, teaching not his own doctrine,†† nor doing his own will, but promulgating the doctrine and performing the will of his God and Father; and because of his persevering devotion and obedience to the Divine Commission he had received from Heaven, he was, by his mistaken countrymen, put to the cruel and ignominious death of the Cross, wherefore, God having rais-

* Rom. 1. 20 † See authenticity and authority of the Scriptures. ‡ Mal. 2. 10; Eph. 4. 6. ‖ Rom. 7. 18—25, and 8. 20—23: 2 Cor. 5. 4. § See Lectures 15 and 19 of Systematical Theology. ¶ See Lecture 12, Systematical Theology. ** Acts 2. 36; 5. 31; and 10. 38. †† John 6. 38, and 7. 16.

ed him from the dead, highly exalted him as the image of his person, and the administrator of his kingdom among men,* whom as shepherd and head, he will conduct to felicity, perfect and interminable, through the wisdom and power delegated to him by the Ancient of Days.†

8. The Lord Jesus in the exercise of that power and wisdom given him by the Father, hath established a holy church on earth, including all those of every sect or name, who calling themselves Christians and believing his sacred and divine commission, earnestly labor to understand his religion and conform their lives to his holy and perfect example. These, and these exclusively, constitute his church on earth; but they are a kind of first fruits of the Spirit, ‡ a little leaven, which leaveneth the whole lump. Among them the presence and influence of the divine Spirit peculiarly dwell; ‖ Jesus is with them in power and spirit;§ and the peace and consolations of the Almighty satisfy their souls with spiritual fatness.

9. In this church, Christ has sanctioned and instituted the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper,¶ to be continued to all generations: and these are characteristic of the order of God's house. Baptism represents that cleansing or purification, which *every soul of man requires, and must experience before he can enter the regions of bliss and immortality.* The Lord's Supper is not only a grateful remembrance of the Mediatorial sufferings and death on behalf of mankind, and a memorial of the blessed founder of our holy religion, but also a sacred bond and pledge of union between Christ and the believer. Baptism may be duly administered by dipping or sprinkling tbe person in the name of the Lord Jesus, or in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,** according to disposition and circumstances; and the Sacrament of the Supper, received either kneeling or sitting, as may most tend to mental devotion, without any injury to the nature and design of these Christian Institutions.

10. Christ has establisbed an entire equality of authority and privilege, among all the ministers of his Gospel;†† whoever, therefore, exercises Lordship over them, usurps Christ's Headship. Ministers duly approved by congregations, may both teach

* Mat. 28. 18; Philip 2. 9, 10. † Dan. 7. 13, 14. Though Christ be thus highly exalted, and all Christians bow in his name, yet he is by no means an object of lawful adoration. See Systematical Theology, p. 117. ‡ James 1. 18; Rom. 8. 23. ‖ John 14. 17, and 16.13. § Mat 18. 20; 28. 20. ¶ Mat. 28. 19; Luke 22 19; 1 Cor. 11. 26; John 14. 3.

** To be Baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, means, to be baptized in the name and belief of one God, called the Father, revealed by his Son Christ, whose message was confirmed by the influence and miracles of God: for the Holy Spirit, means the divine influence. See Dr. S. Clark's Commentary.

and rule.* agreeably to apostolic example, and the precepts of the Gospel. The ministers and officers of a church; may transact all business belonging thereunto, but in cases of difficulty or disagreement, which cannot be satisfactorily settled, appeals ought to be made to the Association, or Presbytery,† and such matters as cannot be fully adjusted there, may be further carried to the Convention or Synod and there determined. This is that beautiful order exhibited in the New Testament, and practised by the primitive followers and disciples of our Lord and Master.

11. The word *salvation*, implies deliverance from evil or danger. Hence, the term sometimes means a temporal deliverance‡ from some danger of bodily health or happiness; and in other places of Scripture, it implies deliverance from moral evil, ‖ which is effected through the renovating influence of the Gospel, by faith and repentance. In this sense, it means deliverance from sin and its consequences, which begins when the sinner turneth from his iniquity and doeth that which is lawful and right: and becomes more and more perfect in proportion to the renovation of the moral character through the increase of light and faith. Repentance is a change of mind,§ generally implying conviction of evil thoughts and actions, sorrow for past misconduct,¶ and purposes of amendment: the change of views and desires consequential on repentance, may be justly called conversion.** Evangelical faith is that firm persuasion†† of the truth of the Christian religion, which induces a man to conform his life to its precepts, interest himself in its hopes,‡‡ and rely on the God of Mercy for the enjoyment of those blessings which he has therein promised to mankind, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Hence, regeneration and salvation are synonymous, and imply that change of mind, character, and conduct, wrought in the human soul, by the knowledge and influence of Almighty God ‖‖ which is rendered perfect and complete, by Christ, at the resurrection.

12. God has endowed the mind of man with a certain portion of freedom, so that he is justly accountable for his actions: yet this liberty can by no means resist or vary the Divine purpose,§§ or render the least occurrence or action either contingent or doubtful; consequently, all praise or blame rests in the designs of the actor. Hence, retribution is rather consequential than arbitrary, being generally the effect of sin, and not the penalty of a law: ¶¶ thus, agreeably to the ancient maxim, "virtue is its

*1 Tim. 3. 5, and 5. 17. † Acts 15. 2, 6. ‡ Ex. 14. 13. ‖ Acts 13. 26; Rom. 1. 16; Philip. 2. 12. § Rom 11. 29; Heb. 12. 17. ¶ 2 Cor. 7. 10. ** Ex. 2. 30. †† Rom. 5. 1; Heb. 11. 1. ‡‡ James 2. 22; Acts 15. 9; and Gal. 5. 6. ‖‖ Philip. 2. 13. §§ Rom. 9. 16, 19; Is. 46. 10; Eph. 1. 11.

¶¶ The Law of God is not the cause of Sin and death; nor was it ever given for the purpose of making man more liable to sin and misery than

own reward," the Scriptures teach, that God is no respecter of persons; for he that doeth wrong shall suffer for the wrong he hath done.* In this way the righteous are recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner;† and in this sense, we are manifest before the Judgment seat of Christ, and receive in body, according to what we have done, whether good or bad.‡

13. Man is a simple, material, and mortal being; when he dies his conscious existence becomes extinct and he therefore depends wholly on the resurrection for restoration of existence and sensation. In dissolution, his soul or spiritual part, being refined and purified, will be immortalized and freed from all moral imperfection, bodily passion, or defect; and constituted imperishable and happy in whatever place or circumstances it may be destined to occupy. And as the scriptures and all antiguity induce us to believe the existence and agency of Angels, which are represented as men‖ in several parts of the scriptures, there can be no reason assigned, why God may not commission as many of these human Spirits as he pleases, to minister in the affairs of mankind on this earth.§

14. The Resurrection follows instantaneously after death, but the body that shall be raised will consist only of that part of man which has always been invisible; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; therefore the fleshly part once committed to the earth shall never be resusitated: "*dust shall retnrn to dust.*" The change in the resurrection shall be perfect and complete; from earthly to heavenly, from carnal to spiritual, from mortal to immortal Our identity shall be preserved, consequently the resurrection. shall not be a new creation, but a purification of the constituent principles of the intellectual man. Every one shall feel and know himself to be the same, and our knowledge shall extend to all former acquaintance. All the human race shall be raised in glory, but all shall not be alike happy. Moral evil and pain shall be for ever unknown, but the grade of moral and intellectual attainment at death shall be retained in the change, and one star shall differ from another in glory to all eternity

he would have been without it. Sin and its consequences would have subsisted, had there never been a law.

*Col. 3. 25. †Prov. 11. 31· ‡2 Cor. 5. 10. ‖Gen. xviii. 2, 5, 22; and xix. 1. Heb. xiii. 2: Judges xiii. 11, 21.

§ For illustration and proof of this and the following article, the reader is referred to Systematical Theology, fourth part; Law's "Theory of Religion," and Simpson's "Essays on the language of Scripture."

Done at Utica, in the beginning of 1826,
And fortieth year of the Author's age.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE STUDY OF

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

OF THE SCRIPTURES IN GENERAL.

The word, *Scripture*, signifies a writing of any kind and may be applied to any written production without discrimination, but "The scriptures" used emphatically, denote, primarily the sacred books of the Jews, * and, afterwards, the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists. † In like manner the word, *Bible*, originally signifies a book of any description, but employed emphatically "The Bible" has become a common appellation of that book which contains the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Hence, that collection of sacred books which includes the whole of Divine Revelation, has obtained among christians the name of "The Bible," or "The Scriptures," by way of eminence.

The Greek word, *Diatheke*, chiefly implies a disposition or dispensation, and being used to denote that disposal of secular affairs which a man may make, during his life, and which becomes of force after his death, has been appropriately rendered TESTAMENT. The word, however, may signify a law, an agreement or covenant: but notwithstanding the difference of opinion on this subject among learned Commentators, the word, Testament, seems the most suitable. The word, Covenant, implies reciprocal conditions, and though well applied to the Jewish scriptures because in them God makes promises and requires certain duties, to which Israel assenting, the covenant or agreement was ratified by the blood of sprinkling, yet is not accurately descriptive of the Evangelical histories. In human covenants, the contracting parties are at liberty, and have generally the same right of proposing the conditions on which they are willing to agree and covenant together, but here the case is far otherwise. God is the Creator we his creatures. He is the sovereign lawgiver, whose precepts should be obeyed without reserve. When therefore he speaks of making a covenant with mankind, his meaning is, that out of condescension and mere goodness, he is pleased to descend from the majesty of his glory to engage his creatures to obedience by a

*Luke 4. 21. †John v. 39; and 2 Tim. iii. 16. †2 Peter iii. 16.

principle of love and gratitude. The *New Testament* therefore is that which contains the last will or sacred deed of our Heavenly Father, revealed to us by Jesus, the Christ, declaring the benefits he has ordained to confer on us, both in this world and in that which is to come. And as all these inexpressible blessings are so many tokens of parental love and favor, communicated freely and graciously to the children of men, they are better described by the general name of a will or testament, than that of covenant. The title of the New Testament was not given to the Christian scriptures by the Evangelists or Apostles; for in their time the canon of this sacred volume was not composed. It is, notwithstanding, of ancient and scriptural authority. By Jeremiah,* God promises a New Testament to his people, and in certain places of the New Testament,† it is said to be ratified by the death of the Testator. The primitive Christians therefore appropriately applied this title to their holy writings, intending thereby to designate the volume as that sacred record or deed in which the Christian's inheritance is sealed to him as a Son of God and an heir of Heaven: and the death of Christ, as a Testator, set forth and applied to our advantage.

The word, *dispensation*, is used to denote those different systems of celestial policy, which the Deity has been pleased to communicate for the disipline and government of his intellectual offspring. Some have inconsiderately and unreasonably taken offence at the variety of the Divine conduct towards mankind, and imperatively denounced the thought of different dispensations originating from the one, unchanging Eternal. But these men ought to reflect, that a governor may alter his laws, and still remain constant and unchangeable, because he may not always have the same subjects, or because their condition may change. God therefore as a prudent Father, deals differently with his children, in different times and places according to their age, strength, and capacity. When the aborigines of this world had departed from that law of nature, which the Creator had implanted in them as reasonable creatures, it was necessary to recal them to their duty by an express revelation. Jehovah having redeemed the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, where they had long been accustomed to the manners and ceremonies of the Egyptians, it was perhaps expedient to adopt a different administration from that which would have been necessary for persons in different circumstances or selected for other ends.

Witsius,‡ says "There is a remarkable agreement between the Jewish and Egyptian religions, which never could have arisen fortuitously. Either the Egyptians have derived from the Jews, or the Jews from the Egyptians." Indeed there is nothing that more reasonably accounts for this striking similarity, than the supposition that Moses retained in the Jewish Ritual, whatever was

* Chap. xxxi. 31. † Mat. xxvi. 28. Heb. ix. 15. ‡ Egyptiaca, book first.

considered harmless in the Egyptian ceremonies. "When a man," says Beausobre, "intends to build, he must erect scaffolds, which must again be taken down, when the building is finished: and this is the reason, which the New Testament assigns for the difference between the two covenants."

The author of the *new covenant* proceeded in the same manner as the legislator of the *old* had done before. God's design in giving the children of Israel a law, being to distinguish them from the rest of the world by a particular kind of worship; he adapted, in the best manner that can be conceived, the *ordinances* he gave that people, to their state and circumstances. Whatever might lead them into idolatry, that he forbade upon the severest penalties. But lest they should at the same time, have an aversion for the religion he instituted, he was therefore pleased to appropriate to his worship, some of the harmless customs and ceremonies that were received among those nations, with whom the Israelites had conversed The same method was observed by *Jesus Christ*, in his establishment of the religion which he revealed to mankind.

All men in general, of what rank soever they be, or whatever religion they profess, cannot but look with profound respect, and a pious admiration, on a book which has these two characters: First, That lays before them that *supreme happiness*, of which the author of our nature hath implanted an invincible desire within us; and which, Secondly, in order to lead them thereto, brings them only back to a spiritual worship, to the dictates of their own consciences, and requires nothing of them, but what they would have been in duty bound to perform, even though no other law had been given them, if they would but have made a due use of their reason. Where shall we find a book that teaches a worship more worthy both of God, and of a reasonable creature? It is plain and unaffected, free from all rites and ceremonies which are not either holy in themselves, or directly tend to make men holy in their lives and conversation, and is withal great and noble. It teaches us to love, above all things, the most amiable of beings, and to express this love, by a perfect and sincere obedience to his commands.

God having been pleased to make use of the *ministry* of men, in revealing to us his *will*, and transmitting to posterity the *divine oracles*; a *general* knowledge, at least, of several previous articles is absolutely necessary for a right understanding of the *holy scriptures*. We must know, for instance, the *time* and *country* in which the *sacred* penman lived; their *language* and *character*; the *religion*, *manners*, *customs*, and *usages* of the people with whom they conversed; and many other particulars, taken notice of hereafter.

When we come to a close and thorough examination of the *holy scriptures*, we shall, unless furnished with the knowledge of the particulars above-mentioned, be continually liable to mistakes,

imagine we understand what we have no notion of, or, at best, but a very imperfect one, and find ourselves puzzled and put to a stand at every turn. For want of these helps, the *scriptures* are frequently ill understood, and ill explained. Some put *abstracted* and *metaphysical* senses on passages that contain *plain* and *simple* truths, and expressed in common terms. Others have learnt a *system of divinity*, and instead of explaining scripture by scripture, by considering the *context* and *parallel* places, wrest the word of God to their pre-conceived opinions. Others again, having regard only to the *modern* languages, customs, and manners, cannot but mistake the meaning of the *sacred* writers, for want (if I may so say) of conveying themselves back to the time *when*, the country *where*, the *sacred penman* wrote. Hence it comes to pass, that the holy scriptures, and the christian religion, are so disfigured, as hardly now to be known in the schools and seminaries of learning; where the heads of young students are filled with a thousand chimerical notions, entirely unheard of by the Evangelists. In order to remedy these inconveniences, we shall endeavour to give a general knowledge of what is necessary for the more profitable reading the *holy scriptures*, especially the *New Testament*. *

I hope I shall be perfectly excusable for introducing, at this place, the following extract from Bishop Hare, *On the Difficulties and Discouragements, which attend the Study of the Scriptures.*

I do not wonder at the surprise with which you received, the advice I ventured to give you, in relation to the study of the Scriptures. For one, who is a clergyman himself, to seem to dissuade those of his own order from a study that has so many arguments to recommend it, and which, in the opinion of all good men, ought to be their chief business, has, I confess, the appearance of a strange paradox, and that of the worst sort. It looks like popery and priestcarft; and therefore young and tender minds may easily be forgiven, if they startle at the first proposal of it; those, especially, who have a just sense of the excellency and inspiration of the Scriptures, and are eagerly bent on the pursuit of such truths, as more immediately tend to the advancement of virtue and religion.

I shall, in the first place, take leave to ask, *Cui bono*, What good can come from so much pains? For it may seem that a free, serious, impartial, and laborious study of the Scriptures will be of no great service, for the following reasons:

First—Because it is plain the orthodox faith is not founded on a nice and critical knowledge of the Scriptures. Many of the ancient Christians, it will be allowed, were not great critics, but argued very much in a mystical way. Origen in particular, who was the greatest scholar Christianity had bred to that time, per-

* See Beausobre and Lenfant's Introduction to the New Testament. pp. 1, 2, 4, 160.

petually turns the letter of Scripture into allegory. Whence we may reasonably conclude, that the knowledge of the bare literal sense was, in the judgment of many, even in those times, thought to be of little use.

Secondly—But it is certain that the original language of the Old Testament was known to very few for the first six centuries, in which those general councils were held, wherein all the articles of the orthodox faith were settled. They governed themselves and determined all their controverted points by the Greek version; and those who knew Hebrew best, whether they took to the mystical or literal way, had the misfortune to be least orthodox. So it was with Origen, who knew the Scriptures so well, that he had them all by heart. And Eusebius and others, who studied and understood the literal sense of the Scriptures best in the next ages, succeeded little better; so that this study seems to have been of little use to the establishment of the orthodox faith. Now, if an exact and critical knowledge of the Scriptures was not necessary to the settling of the faith, it cannot be necessary to the understanding of it, or to the understanding those who have written best on the explication and defence of it. On the contrary, such a knowledge tends to lessen our esteem for the Fathers of the church, by discovering their mistakes; and may weaken our regard to the decisions of Councils, by exposing the falseness of the ground they seem to be built upon. A man, well skilled in the literal sense of the Scriptures, will often find, in the Fathers and councils, texts of Scripture urged very insufficiently; and a great stress laid upon passages, which, when critically explained, prove nothing, or perhaps make against them. Which suggests to me a third reason, why it may seem that such a study can do no good.

Thirdly—And that is, because the orthodox faith does not depend upon the Scriptures considered absolutely in themselves, but as explained by catholic tradition. The faith was preserved in creeds, and handed down from one orthodox bishop to another, whose business it was to keep this sacred *depositum* pure and undefiled, and to deliver it to his successor entire as he received it. It was by this tradition the main articles of faith were preserved in the church, and not from any particular study of the Scriptures. The ground, therefore, of these articles must carefully be distinguished from the Scriptures that have been brought in proof of them; these proofs may be weak and inconclusive, but the truth stands independent of them. It is the faith they have received; and, if at any time they argue weakly for it, from the Scriptures, it is an argument indeed against their learning, but none against their orthodoxy.

This therefore may seem another good argument to prove, that an exact and careful study of the Scriptures is not a safe and profitable study. It is a much safer, as well as a more compen-

dious way to make a man orthodox, to study the traditions of the church.

But you will say, that to send you from Scripture to tradition, is to turn you out of paradise, the garden of God, into a vast, confused, bewildered wood; and this is so far from mending the matter, that it is ten times more laborious than the study I would dissuade you from; and so, I confess, it is, if all the ecclesastical writers were to be carefully read, in order to know the catholic tradition. But that is not my meaning; the substance of catholic tradition lies in much less compass; the established church, you will allow, is orthodox in all necessary points. If, therefore, you know the sense of the established church, you have in epitome the church catholic; and therefore you need only study her opinions to make you orthodox; and this the most illiterate man may find in the liturgy and articles. This, I trust you will allow, is as short a way as could be wished, of knowing all that is necessary to he known. A very little time will serve a man to read, in his mother tongue, things which altogether would not fill a moderate volume; and he will be orthodox enough!

Fourthly—But if you will insist shat it is Scripture and not tradition, on which the faith is founded; there is one thing further I must put you in mind of, which may seem to prove, that a profound and laborious study of the Scriptures, will not make you more orthodox, It is a fundamental principle among protestants, that whatever is necessary to be believed, is plainly and clearly revealed in the Scriptures. You will say, perhaps, that notwithstanding this declaration of protestants, it may and has been urged against them by their adversaries, they do believe, and maintain as necessary, articles that cannot be proved by plain and clear passages of the scripture. This, I confess, has been urged, and may possibly be true of all parties of them, but, if it be true, it only proves that they are not true to their principle; not that the principle is not in itself true and good. And he surely must be allowed to be the best protestant, who adheres best to the principles on which the reformation is founded.

Fifthly—Once more; supposing the study of the Scriptures as necessary as you please; in the last place, I say, and I am sure the world will say it with me, that they have been sufficiently studied already. And if any parts remain still obscure, who can hope to clear up passages that have puzzled so many great men? Or will presume in disputable points to set up his private judgment, against them that were men of more learning, or abler parts, of greater application, and better acquainted with the tradition of the church, than any one will now be allowed to be? And (which is the best guide in the knowledge of religion) they were moreover men of exemplary piety, devotion, and humility; virtues, of which very little footsteps are to be found in the learned men of our times.

My second argument is this, that a painful, exact, impartial study of the Scriptures, will by some, be thought not only to do no good, but also a great deal of hurt, both to the public and to yourself.

It is certain that disputes in the church disturb the peace of it; and it is as certain these disputes have been as generally raised by men pretending to a superior knowledge of the Scriptures, and to discoveries that have escaped others. The Scriptures have always been made this use of by the heretics of old; and it is the character of the great heretics of this and the last age, who have set up for a free and impartial search into the literal sense of the Scriptures above the rest of the Christian world. But with what success? They have purchased their pretended knowledge of the Scriptures at the expense of their reputation, and and their study has destroyed their orthodoxy. And were not their books and opinions carefully suppressed, and their persons rendered odious to the people, who knows what disturbances they might have created to the church? On the other hand, the peace the church has enjoyed for many years, among its own members, seems to be owing to no one thing more, than to a general neglect of this study: and the dangers, that at present threaten its tranquility, come wholly from men who have endeavored to revive a study that has so often proved pernicious to its peace.

Nor can it well be otherwise; for what security has a man that sets out in this way; that attempts to study the Scriptures in a free and impartial manner, laying aside all prepossessions and previous notions, resolving to see with his own eyes, and judge for himself, and to believe nothing that he is not, upon his own search, convinced is clearly contained within them? What security has such a man, that he shall not fall into some opinions that have been already condemned as erroneous and heretical, or who may interfere with those that are commonly received. It is so natural for curious and inquisitive minds to deviate from the common road, and the examples are so many, that probably, you will do so too; unless you have more lead in your constitution, or a more refined understanding, than any curious man ever had yet; otherwise you cannot be sure, that you shall not study yourself into doubts at least, if not into opposite opinions, concerning some received notions. You will doubt perhaps of the authority or author of some canonical book, and think perhaps that some passages are interpolated, or that some celebrated texts are not genuine, or should be otherwise read, or have not been rightly understood, or do not prove the point they are commonly brought to. You may fall into notions that will be thought tending to Arianism, or the like; you may reject arguments brought from the Old Testament, to prove the trinity, as trifling, and proving nothing but the ignorance of those that make use of them. You may think a prophecy has a literal meaning, where commonly the

mystical is thought the only one You may think that many texts in the New Testament, which appear against the Socinians, do not prove against the Arian notion. That the title, Son of God, has not always one uniform meaning in the gospel; and that that single expression, of itself, is no proof of any thing in God analogous to generation in men. That the identical consubstantiality of the Son, the eternal procession of the Spirit, and many other notions relating to the trinity, though they may be true in themselves. are not so in virtue of the texts alleged for them.

Now, if you should study yourself into any new opinions, or into old ones that have been condemned, what will you do; Will you keep them to yourself or publish them? Or shall I rather say, it is no question. The authors of new notions are apt to be very fond of them; they think it barbarous and cruel, to stifle the infant in its birth. The truths you think you have discovered, either are, or will be thought by you, of too much importance to the honor of God and the good of religion, to be concealed. You will look on them as the blessings of God on your studies; and think it a capital crime to extinguish the light, and suppress the knowledge he has imparted to you. In short, you will think yourself under the highest obligation not to dissemble in religious matters, and conceal from the church of God, opinions which you are convinced are not only true, but of great service to it. Let me then conclude, that the novel or revived opinions, which your study leads you into, will be published to the world; and if so what now will be the consequence?

Secondly—I add yourself, as another motive that ought to have great weight with you in this question; for you cannot disturb the peace of the church, without being greatly a sufferer yourself. If you really do not disturb its peace, it is all one, you will be interpreted to do it, and that will bring on you more evils than I would wish to my greatest enemy. In a word, you will be thought a heretic; a term in which there is a strange magic, though it has no determinate meaning in the mouth of the people, nor any ill meaning in itself. It is supposed to include in it every thing that is bad; it makes every thing appear odious and deformed; it dissolves all friendships, extinguishes all former kind sentiments, however just and well deserved; and, from the time a man is deemed a heretic, it is charity to act against all rules of charity; and, the more they violate the laws of God in dealing with him, it is, in their opinion, doing God the greater service!

To say what the Scriptures have said, and in the very same words too, if not explained in the common way, will be blasphemy; and the most sincere concern for the honor of Almighty God, you cannot be sure will not be interpreted downright Atheism. Every thing you say, or do, will have a wrong turn given it. A slip of memory will be made wilful prevarication; a mistake in a citation shall be forgery and corruption: an error, in an

incidental point of learning, shall be good proof that you know nothing. Every inaccurate expression shall be pressed into a crime; any little warmth of temper shall be aggravated into pride, and positiveness into a contempt of authority and ill manners. In short, all the indiscretions of a man's former life, shall be ripped up, and nothing forgiven, that can be remembered or strained to his disadvantage.

Whereas the orthodox man lives quiet and at ease, unmolested and unenvied. His faults (and who has not some!) shall be extenuated or excused, if not quite buried in oblivion, his want of temper shall be a commendable zeal; his indiscretion, good nature; his mistakes shall be imputed to haste or inadvertancy; and, when they cannot be defended, it will be regarded in his favor, that the greatest men sometimes err, and the writers of the first rank are not always in the right; or perhaps a mistake shall turn to his advantage; it will be shown to be an error on the right side, and that a good cause drew him into it. His learning, on the other hand, shall be magnified beyond measure; every body will be full of his good qualities, and his virtues shall be set in the best light to show themselves and cover his faults. In a word, orthodoxy atones for all vices, and heresy extinguishes all virtues. That this is nothing but the bare truth, I appeal to what you every day hear and see yourself.

In truth, there is nothing more absurd, than to say the glorious things we do daily of the Scriptures, and, at the same time, make the study of them, to men of sincere and honest minds, so extremely hazardous and inconvenient. If, then, we would not be guilty of discouraging a study which we acknowledge to be the great duty of the clergy, as we are Christians; if we would be true to the fundamental principles of the reformation, as protestants, that the Scriptures are the only rule of faith; let us use our best endeavors to remove the great obstacles that lie against the study of them; let us do what we can, that learned men may have full liberty to study the Scriptures freely and impartially; good encouragement given them to go through the labor and difficulties of such a study, not slightly and superficially, but with such application and diligence as the nature of the thing requires; and have leave to speak their sense with all manner of safety; that their opinions may be examined fairly, and with temper; that their names be not unjustly loaded with calumny and slander; that their words and actions may be interpreted with the same candor, as is shown to those that differ from them; that if what they advance be right, it may be received; if wrong, their errors may be refuted.

Till there is such a liberty allowed to clergymen, till there is such a security for their reputations, fortunes and persons, I fear I must add, till so difficulty a study meets with proportionable encouragement, it is impossible a sincere, impartial, and laborious

application to it should generally prevail; and till it does, it is as impossible the Scriptures should be well understood; and till they are, they are a rule of faith in name only. For it is not the words of Scripture, but the sense, which is the rule; and so far as that is not understood, so far the Scriptures are not our rule, whatever we pretend; but the sense that men have put on them; men fallible as ourselves, and who were by no means so well furnished, as the learned at present are, with the proper helps to find out the true meaning of Scripture. And while we take the sense of the Scriptures in this manner upon consent, and see not with our own eyes, we insensibly relapse into the principles of popery, and give up the only ground on which we can justify our separation from the Church of Rome. It was a right to study and judge of the Scriptures for themselves, that our first reformers asserted with so good effect; and their successors can defend their adherence to them, on no other principle.

If, then, we are concerned for the study of the Scriptures, farther than in words; if we in earnest think them the only rule of faith, let us act as if we thought so; let us heartily encourage a free and impartial study of them; let us lay aside that malignant, arbitrary, persecuting, popish spirit; let us put no fetters on men's understandings, nor any other bounds to their inquiries, but what God and truth have set. Let us, if we would not give up the protestant principle, that the Scriptures are plain and clear in the necessary articles, declare nothing to be necessary, but what is clearly revealed in them.

Then may we hope to see the study of these divine books, so happily cultivated by the united labors of the learned, when under no discouragements, that all may, in the main, agree in the true meaning of them,

Every degree of darkness is a want of so much light; and all want of light is a certain degree of darkness. To refuse them a greater degree of light, where it can be had, is in truth, to prefer darkness; which in my humble opinion, can never be reasonable or excusable. Those, who are of another mind, plainly distrust themselves or their cause. Which, if it can bear the light, why should it not be shown in it? But, if it cannot, it is not the cause of God, or of the Son of God; for God is light, and in him is no darkness; and the Son of God is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Such, alas! is the true picture of man's conduct. Man! blind to his own interest, and indifferent about all that tends to the well being of his fellow men, or the honor of his immortal and beneficent Creator. Thousands are too timid to either profess religion, or follow its dictates—thousands make a gain of godliness, and, void of all religion, assume the mask merely to obtain a name among men, or an opportunity to carry into execution fraudulent purposes; and, in general, the complaint of the Proph-

et is too true: "the Prophets prophesy falsely, and the Priests bear rule by their means; and the people love to have it so!"* But let all that would profit by reading the holy Scriptures, show their gratitude to their Maker, for his favor to them, divest themselves of all prejudice, and set aside all creeds when they approach the sacred volume, and receive with meekness, the word of life which alone makes wise to salvation. If men do not so, they cannot expect the blessing of God or the guidance of his holy spirit: but rather to be left to their own blindness and obduracy of heart, if not judicially hardened for their impiety, in rejecting the counsel of God.

Ministers of Christ should be instant in season and out of season, to obtain a most intimate acquaintance with this sacred volume—they should learn to call no man Master but Christ; and fearlessly to study and follow the dictates of holy writ. Though the learned Bishop, from whose writings we have taken the above extract, would seem to discourage the study of the Scriptures, every man must perceive the tone of irony in which the advice is given. We are creatures of a day, and are as a shadow that will soon fly away: let, therefore, our time be devoted to the best purposes. "Blessed is he that readeth."

Nil sine magno
Vita labore dedit mortalibus.——*Horace.*

AUTHENTICITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

By the authenticity of a book is meant, that it is the original, genuine production of the age and person to whom it has been ascribed. Hence it easily appears that the authority and authenticity of a book are by no means inseparably connected: for if a book contain a correct narrative of facts, it will not invalidate these facts to attribute that book to a different or even a ficticious author. Moreover the authority and authenticity of a book do not absolutely depend on its purity and integrity; for a book may have been interpolated and thereby corrupted; it may have been curtailed, and therefore not entire; and notwithstanding it may have suffered in both these respects, it may still be regarded as both authoritative and authentic, because all the main facts and important features of the genuine narrative may still remain unimpaired and discernible.

All Biblical Critics, who deserve the name, readily admit that there are interpolations, and likewise that there may be deficien-

*Jer. 5. 31.

cies in the present copies of our scriptures, yet they do not hence deduce any argument against the authority or authenticity of these sacred books. Let it also be carefully remembered that the authority and authenticity of all the books of the New Testament are not equally manifest. The evidence in favor of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that of James, the second of Peter, the second and third of John, that of Jude and the Revelation is by no means so clear and decisive as the evidence for the other remaining books of the New Testament.—Nor can the claims of the two first chapters of Matthew and Luke and the story of the adultress in John 8, 3-12, be equally supported with those of the remaining parts of the same books.

Having observed what we consider suitable and necessary precaution in the commencement of this Introduction, we now proceed to show that the authenticity of the historical books of the New Testament is not only as certain as that of the best Roman, Grecian, and Jewish histories, but that the genuineness of these books is much more clear and evident than that of any other ancient books in the world.

1. From the internal evidence afforded by the books, we derive a powerful argument in favor of their claims to be the genuine productions of the times and authors to whom they are ascribed. The books abound in Hebraisms, and therefore, must have been written by Jews; and the Chaldaic and Syriac words and idioms which frequently occur, prove the writers not only to have been natives of Palestine, but also to have lived at that period in which a mixture of Hebrew, Syriac and Chaldaic constituted the common dialect of that country. If we add to this the evidence arising from the occurrence of Latin words with Greek terminations, we must fix the date of these books to that time in which the influence of Rome effected the language and affairs of Palestine, which is the very epoch propounded by the sacred penmen. The Apostolic style bears a great resemblance to that of the Septuagint or Hellenistic dialect, and abounds with words, expressions, proverbs and maxims, that were used among the Rabbins. The style and language of the New Testament is just such as might have been expected from the Apostles: it is neither pure nor classical, but Greek coming from men of Hebrew origin, such as would naturally be found in the writings of men who used a language, which, though spoken where they lived, was not the common dialect of the country. This peculiarity of style is a strong proof of the genuineness of their writings. The Christian Fathers were for the greater part, totally ignorant of Hebrew, and the language of the few, who had any knowledge of Hebrew, as Justin, Origen; and Epiphanius, bears no resemblance to that of the New Testament. Who then could forge these books? The only persons who were at all qualified for such an undertaking, were the Jewish Christians, or Nazarenes, but these used chiefly, if not

altogether, the Gospel by Matthew, and therefore, could not be suspected of forging the rest of the sacred writings. Moreover, there are numerous places in the other books of the New Testaments where several tenets of the Nazarenes, are disapprobated or condemned, which show clearly, that they could not be the writers; and as no Jew, who disbelieved the christian religion, would forge books destructive of his own system and opposed to his education and prejudices, the Christian Scriptures must be assigned to the authors whose names have been affixed to them.

These sacred writings contain many allusions to particular persons, places, opinions, and customs which are admitted by other authentic histories to have existed in those times; and the historical incidents mentioned by the sacred writers, are sufficiently corroborated by so indisputable authorities, as to render this part of the evidence decisive. The accuracy of the numerous allusions to the circumstances of that period, which the Gospel History embraces, amounts to proof, that it is the production of authors who lived antecedent to the destruction of Jerusalem, and consequently about the time which has been ascribed to them, by the evidence which has already been adduced. The destruction of Jerusalem swept away the whole fabric of Jewish Polity, and we cannot conceive how the memory of a future generation, could have retained that minute, varied, and intimate acquaintance with the customs, politics, and statistics of a nation no longer in existence, which is evinced in every part of the Evangelical history. On examination we find that both Heathen and Christian writers of subsequent ages, often betray their ignorance of the customs which prevailed in Judea during the time of Christ: and we must esteem it a strong argument in favor of the antiquity of the New Testament, that on subjects in which the probability of detection was so great, and where the writers could scarcely advance one step in the narrative, without the danger of betraying their time by some mistaken allusion, it stands distinguished from every later composition, being able to bear the most minute and intimate comparison with cotemporary historians of that period in which the events of the Gospel History transpired. Had only one author exhibited this accuracy of allusion, it would have been esteemed a strong evidence of his antiquity; but where there are no less than seven different authors, whose productions, published in different parts of the world, sustain an almost unexpected accuracy through the whole of their varied and distinct narratives; it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion, that they were either the eye- witnesses of their own history, or lived about the period of its accomplishment."

2. External Testimony renders the evidence for the authenticity of the Christian books as strong and satisfactory, as it is possible for the mind of the inquirer to conceive. But before we proceed to state the evidence, let it be duly noticed, that the

New Testament contains four distinct histories, the genuineness of any one of which is perfectly sufficient. We are, therefore, entitled to so many separate probabilities in favor of the genuineness of the Gospel history. External testimony then affords us the following evidence:

The historical books of the New Testament have been quoted or referred to, as the works of the disciples and followers of Jesus, by a chain of Christian writers, in close and regular succession from the apostolic age to the present time: so that in pursuing this train of references, we do not meet with a single chasm, from the days of the original writers.

Here Paley very judiciously observes "the medium of proof, stated in the proposition, is of all others the most unquestionably the least liable to any practices of fraud, and is not diminished by the lapse of ages. Bishop Burnet, in the history of his own times, inserts various extracts from Lord Clarendon's history. One such insertion is a proof, that Lord Clarendon's history was extant in the time of Bishop Burnet, and that it had been read and received by him as a work of Clarendon's, and also regarded by him as an authentic account of the transactions which that work relates."

The references to the books of the New Testament, in the writings of the Apostolic and Christian Fathers, are of three kinds: 1. Express quotations with the name of the author; 2. Quotations without the name of the author, introduced by the Jewish method of citing Scripture, "*it is written;*" 3. Innumerable allusions without these marks, scattered throughout all the writings of the early Fathers.

During the second century, Papias, Ireneas, Clement, and Tertullian quote the Gospels by name, tell us that Matthew and Luke wrote first; that Matthew composed his Gospel in the language of the Jews or Hebrew; that Mark derived the materials of his history from Peter's preaching, and that Luke recorded what he had learned of Paul. Justin about the year 130, Tertullian fifty years after, and Origen in 230, inform us that the Gospels were read and expounded in the Churches: and we have a number of these excellent discourses of Origen, extant till the present time. Tatian in the second, and Ammonius in the third century, composed harmonies of the four Gospels; and Eusebius in the fourth century, wrote expressly on the discrepances of the Evangelists.

Pantenus, Origen and others in the third century, and a host of writers in the fourth, have given Commentaries on different parts and books of the New Testament. In the fourth century, catalogues of the books of the New Testament, were formed by Athanasius, Cyril, and the council of Laodicea, which interposed its authority to regulate and establish the Canon of the Scriptures. This council received all the books of the New Testament ex-

cept the Revelation. Throughout the numerous controversies and divisions of the Christian church from the Apostolic age to the present time, the Scriptures of the New Testament have been acknowledged as authentic, and regarded as books possessing authority, by all sects without exception. For proof and illustration of all that has been here alledged, for the authenticity of the New Testament, the reader is referred to Paley's Evidences, Jones' New Method of settling the Canon, Marsh's Michaelis, and above all to that immortal monument of learning and industry, Lardner's "Credibility of the Gospels."

But there is another argument, which is still more directly addressed to our senses. We can produce a vast number of manuscripts, found in various countries; many of them from eight to twelve hundred years old: likewise ancient versions of these books, in languages which have long since ceased to be spoken in any part of the world. The existence of these manuscripts and versions, show to great satisfaction, that the Scriptures are no modern contrivance. The translations into the Syriac and Latin could not be later than the second century; and the Vatican and Alexandrine Manuscripts were not made later than the fifth.

Notwithstanding all this accumulation of proof, we can yet adduce a species of evidence which will be admitted by unbelievers as still more cogent than any that has been offered. The testimony of unbelievers themselves. Celsus, a heathen Philosopher, about the middle of the second century, wrote a book professedly against Christianity, in which he quotes the Gospels, and says to the Christians: "these things we have alleged out of your own writings." This distinct assertion of Celsus, that the books to which he refers were composed by the disciples of Jesus, is an argument in favor of the authenticity of these books, which cannot be alleged for many of the most esteemed compositions of antiquity. Indeed, this single testimony may be considered as decisive of the fact, that the history of Christ was written by his disciples. What Celsus was in the second, Porphyry became in the third, and Julian in the fourth century. Porphyry calls Matthew the Evangelist of the Christians, and Julian mentions both the name of Matthew and Luke. The works of these writers have been long lost, but a great part of them is preserved in the replies made to them by Origen, Cyril, Jerome, and Eusebius. Not one of these keen antagonists, ever suggested the idea of the Gospel being spurious. On the contrary, they uniformly admit with the Christians the genuineness of the books which ought forever to settle the question in relation to the authenticity of the Christian Scriptures.

"It is most certain, and ought not to be dissembled, that all the books of the *Old* and *New Testaments* have not come confirmed to us by the samo degree of evidence. They may be properly dis-

tributed into two classes, books of *Fact*, and books of *Opinion*. Under the former class I would comprise from *Genesis* to the book of *Job*, with the *Gospels* and *Acts* of the *Apostles*; and under the latter, to make the largest concession to this argument, the *Hagiographa* and *Prophets*, i. e. all the remainder of the *Old Testament*, with the *Epistles* and *Apocalypse* of the *New*. Now, that we may wave all discussion of the evidences and importance of the latter collection, the *Christian* and *Jewish* systems need no support beyond the authenticity of the *historic* class; and I assert in the fullest confidence, and appeal to a multitude of publications in behalf of this assertion, that no history whatever, taking its antiquity into consideration, has more claims to be received as genuine, than the histories in question. And what need of circumstantial detail in repelling the objections of men, who really know just nothing of the subject, and satisfy their *reason* and *philosophy* by peremptory asseveration only, unilluminated by one single ray of information on the topic in dispute? To contravene positions, that have been discussed again and again by writers of the first genius and erudition, and to disparage the genuineness of the *bible histories* wholly and indiscriminately, without some precision of investigation, some special allegations, founded on the report of authentic documents, is intolerable arrogance, and the consummation of literary profligacy. With respect to the *internal* evidence of these *histories*, I am persuaded, and would engage to prove in detail, that they are exceedingly superior to those of any ancient records whatever, whose authenticity is admitted; evidences, of which no man will doubt, who does not insist, on *mathematical demonstration* in cases only susceptible of varying *probabilities*. However this be, it is my settled persuasion, deduced from experience and the manners of mankind, that, if no written memorials of the Jewish and Christian dispensations were at this moment in existence, the present condition of the professors of these systems, as a traduction of believers in a certain system, composing vast aggregates of men through a succession of ages, in a variety of instances persecuted, distressed, and destroyed for their belief cannot be accounted for, but on a supposition of the original reasonableness of these dispensations, in the apprehensions of the first professors: and consequently of their probable authenticity: unless indeed we are resolved to exempt the men of those æras from the common benefits of rationality. I shall only add, from a multiplicity of cogent instances, with reference to one branch of evidence of the first moment, that a comparison of the xxviii. chapter of *Deuteronomy* only, with the subsequent and present state of the *Israelitish* nation, must flash conviction, in favour of the *prophetical* pretensions of the Scriptures: for what affrontery will undertake to prove that the book of Deuteronomy was composed posterior to these events?" *

* Wakefield's Examination of the Age of Reason.

Having made these observations on the authenticityof the Historical books of the New Testament, we judge it expedient to make a few similar remarks on the Historical books of the Old; for on the authenticity and authority of the four gospels and five books of Moses is suspended the veracity of the Jewish and Christian dispensations: and every man must perceive that the *evidences* for the Mosiac and Christian Histories, mutually strengthen and confirm each other.

"In what age and by what author any book is written is a question of fact, that can only be answered by historical testimonies. These historical testimonies are, 1. Unexceptionable witnesses, who possessed both the means of knowing, and who were also willing to communicate the truth; and, 2. Certain marks which may be discerned in the subject-matter, diction, genius, and style of the books, and which show that they were written by the authors to whom they are ascribed, or about the age to which they are referred. The former are termed *external* arguments, and the latter, *internal*; and as these two species of testimony are universally admitted to be sufficient for proving the genuineness of the writings of Thucydides, Plutarch, or Livy, or of any other ancient profane authors, no further testimony ought to be required for the solution of our question.

That the Pentateuch was written by the great legislator of the Hebrews, by whom it was addressed to his contemporaries, and consequently was not, nor could be, the production of later times, we are authorised to affirm from a series of testimonies, which, whether we consider them together or separately, form such a body of evidence, as can be adduced for the productions of no antient profane writers whatever: for, let it be considered what are the marks and characters which prove the genuineness and authenticity of the works of any antient author, and the same arguments may be urged with equal, if not with greater force, in favor of the writings of Moses.

1. 'It is an undeniable fact, that Hebrew ceased to be the living language of the Jews soon after the Babylonish captivity, and that the Jewish productions after that period were in general either Chaldee or Greek. The Jews of Palestine, some ages before the appearance of our Saviour, were unable to comprehend the Hebrew original without the assistance of a Chaldee paraphrase; and it was necessary to undertake a Greek translation, because that language alone was known to the Jews of Alexandria. It necessarily follows, therefore, that every book which is written in *pure* Hebrew, was composed either before or about the time of the Babylonish captivity!* This being admitted, we may advance a step further, and contend, that the period which elapsed between the composition of the most ancient and the most modern book of the Old

*See Doederlein Institutio Theologi Christiani, sect. 38. tom. i. p. 105. Norimbergæ, 1778.

Testament was very considerable; or, in other words, that the most ancient books of the Old Testament were written a length of ages prior to the Babylonish captivity. No language continues during many centuries in the same state of cultivation, and the Hebrew, like other tongues, passed through the several stages of infancy, youth, manhood, and old age. If, therefore, on comparison, the several parts of the Hebrew Bible are found to differ, not only in regard to style, but also in regard to character and cultivation of language; if the one discovers the golden, another the silver, a third a brazen, a fourth the iron age, we have strong internal marks of their having been composed at different and distant periods. No classical scholar, independently of the Grecian history, would believe that the poems ascribed to Homer were written in the age of Demosthenes, the orations of Demosthenes in the time of Origen, or the commentaries of Origen in the days of Lascaris and Chrysoloras. For the very same reason it is certain that the five books, which are ascribed to Moses, were not written in the time of David, the psalms of David in the age of Isaiah, nor the prophecies of Isaiah in the time of Malachi. But it appears from what has been said above, in regard to the extinction of the Hebrew language, that the book of Malachi could not have been written much later than the Babylonish captivity; before that period, therefore, were written the prophecies of Isaiah, still earlier the psalms of David, and much earlier than these the books which are ascribed to Moses. There is no presumption, therefore, whatsoever, a priori, that Moses was not the author or compiler of the Pentateuch.*

2. But further, the five books of Moses contain 'a system of ceremonial and moral laws, which, unless we reject the authority of *all* history, were observed by the Israelites from the time of their departure out of Egypt till their dispersion at the taking of Jerusalem. These *laws* therefore are as ancient as the conquest of Palestine. It is also an undeniable historical fact, that the Jews in every age belived that their ancestors had received them from the hand of Moses, and that these laws were the basis of their political and religious institutions, as long as they continued to be a people."† Things of *private* concern may easily be counterfeited, but not the laws and constitutions of the whole country. It would, indeed, have been impossible to forge the civil and religious code of the Jews without detection: for their civil and religious polity are so blended and interwoven together, that the one cannot be separated from the other. They must, therefore, have been established at the same time; and derived from the same original; and both together evince the impossibility of any forgery more than either of them could singly. The religion and govern-

*Bishop Marsh's Authenticity of the Five Books of Moses vindicated. pp. 6, 7,

†Ibid p. 7

ment of a people cannot be new modelled. Further, many of the institutions, contained in the ceremonial and moral laws given to the Jews by Moses, were so burthensome, and some of them were so hazardous, or rather so certainly ruinous to any nation not secured by an extraordinary providence correspondent to them—especially those relating to the sabbatical year, the resort of all the males to Jerusalem annually at the three great festivals, and the prohibition of cavalry—that forged books, containing such precepts, would have been rejected with the utmost abhorrence. As the whole Jewish people were made the depositories and keepers of their laws, it is impossible to conceive that any nation, with such motives to reject, and such opportunities of detecting, the forgery of the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, should yet receive them and submit to the heavy yoke imposed by the laws contained in them. That they should often throw it off in part, and for a time, and rebel against the divine authority of their law, though sufficiently evinced, is easily to be accounted for, from what we see and feel in ourselves and others every day: but that they should return and repent and submit to it, unless it were really delivered by Moses, and had the sanction of divine authority, is utterly incredible. 'We are therefore reduced to this dilemma, to acknowledge either that these laws were actually delivered by Moses, or that a whole nation during fifteen hundred years groaned under the weight of an imposture, without once detecting or even suspecting the fraud. The Athenians believed that the system of laws, by which they were governed, was composed by Solon; and the Spartans attributed their code to Lycurgus, without ever being suspected of a mistake in their belief. Why then should it be doubted, that the rules prescribed in the Pentateuch were given by Moses? To deny it, is to assert that an effect may exist without a cause, or that a great and important revolution may take place without an agent. We have therefore an argument little short of mathematical demonstration, that the *substance* of the Pentateuch proceeded from Moses; and that the very *words* were written by him, though not so mathematically demonstrable as the former, is at least a moral certainty. The Jews whose evidence alone can decide in the present instance, have believed it from the earliest to the present age: no other person ever aspired to be thought the author, and we may venture to affirm, that no other person could have been the author. For it is wholly incredible, that the Jews, though weak and superstitious, would have received in a later age a set of writings as the genuine work of Moses, if no history and no tradition had preserved the remembrance of his having been the author."*

* Bishop Marsh's Authenticity of the Five Books vindicated, pp. 7, 8, See also Bishop Gleig's edition of Stackhouse's History of the Bible. vol. i. pp. xiv—xix. The following articles of the Jewish Confession of Faith sufficiently attest how firmly the Jews believe the Pentateuch to be the work of Moses.

3. Although the spirit of antient simplicity, which breathes throughout these books, renders it improbable that they were fabricated in a later age; yet, when we add to this the universal consent of those persons, who were most concerned, and best able, to ascertain the point in question, we have an additional testimony in favor of the genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch. If we believe other nations, when they attest the antiquity and specify the authors of their laws, no just reason can be assigned why we should not give equal credit to the Jews, whose testimony is surely as much deserving credit as that of the Athenians, the Lacedemonians, the Romans, and the Persians, concerning Solon, Lycurgus, Numa, and Zoroaster :* or rather, from the facts we shall proceed to state, they are better entitled to belief than any other nation under heaven. 'Every book of the Old Testament implies the previous existence of the Pentateuch: in many of them it is expressly mentioned, allusion is made to it in some, and it is quoted in others. These contain a series of external evidence in its favour, which is hardly to be confuted; and when the several links of this argument are put together, thsy will form a chain, which it would require more than ordinary abilities to break. In the first place, no one will deny that the Pentateuch existed in the time of Christ, and his apostles, for they not only mention it, but quote it.† 'This we admit,' reply the advocates for the hypothesis which it is our object to confute, 'but you cannot therefore conclude that Moses was the author, for there is reason to believe that it was composed by Ezra.' Now, unfortunately for men of this persuasion, Ezra himself is evidence against them; for, instead of assuming to himself the honour which they so liberally confer on him, he expressly ascribes the book of the law to Moses; 'and they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is in Jerusalem, as it is written *in the book of Moses.*'‡ Further, the Pentateuch existed before the time of Ezra, for it is expressly mentioned during the captivity in Babylon by Daniel the prophet‖ B. C. 537 or 538.

I firmly believe, that all the prophecies of Moses our master are true; and that he is the father of all the sages, whether they went before or came after him.

I firmly believe, that the law which we have now in our hands was given by Moses; Lamy's Apparatus Biblicus, vol. i. pp. 245, 246.

* Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ, lib. ii c. i. § vi. vii.

† Matt. v. 27. Mark x. 3. xii. 26. Luke x. 25. xxiv. 44. John vii. 19. viii. 5. Acts xxviii. 23. 1 Cor. ix. 9. 2 Cor. iii. 15.

‡ Ezra vi. 18. See also Ezra iii. 1. and Nehemiah xiii. 1. The law of Moses, the servant of God, is expressly mentioned by Malachi, the contemporary of Ezra. See Mal. iv. 4. The learned Abbadie has shown at considerable length that Ezra could not and did not forge the Pentateuch, and that it was extant long before his time: but his arguments do not admit of abridgment. See his Traité de la Verité de la Religion Chretienne, tom. i. pp. 312—330. ‖ Chap. ix. 11—13.

Long before that event, it was extant in the time of Josiah* B. C. 624, and was then of such acknowledged authority, that the perusal of it occasioned an immediate reformation of the religious usages, which had not been observed according to the "word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book."† It was extant in the time of Hoshea, king of Israel, B. C. 678, since a captive Israelitish priest was sent back from Babylon ‡ to instruct the new colonists of Samaria in the religion which it teaches. By these Samaritans the book of the law was received as genuine, and was preserved and handed down to their posterity,‖ as it also was by the Jews, as the basis of the civil and religious institutions of both nations. § It was extant in the time of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, B. C. 912,¶ who employed public instructors for its promulgation. And, since the Pentateuch was received as the book of the law both by the ten tribes, and also by the two tribes, it follows as a necessary consequence, that they each received it, *before* they became divided into two kingdoms: for if it had been forged in a later age among the Jews, the perpetual enmity that subsisted between them and the Israelites, would have utterly prevented it from being adopted by the Samaritans; and had it been a spurious production of the Samaritans, it would never have been received by the Jews. 'There remains, therefore, only one resource to those who contend that Moses was not the author, namely, that it was written in the period which elapsed between the age of Joshua and that of Solomon. But the whole Jewish history, from the time of their settlement in Canaan, to the building of the temple at Jerusalem, presupposes that the book of the law was written by Moses.' The whole of the temple service and worship was regulated by Solomon, B. C. 1004, according to the law contained in the Pentateuch: as the tabernacle service and worship had previously been by David, B. C. 1042. Could Solomon indeed have persuaded his subjects, that, for more than five hundred years, the worship and polity prescribed by the Pentateuch had been religiously observed by their ancestors, if it had not been observed? Could he have imposed upon them concerning the antiquity of the sabbath, of circumcision, and of their three great festivals? In fact, it is morally inpossible that any forgery could have been executed by or in the time of Solomon. Moreover, that the Pentateuch was extant in the time of David is evident from the very numerous allusions made in his psalms to its contents;**

* 2 Chron. xxxiv. 15. †2 Chron. xxxiv. 21. ‡2 Kings xvii. 26.

‖For a critical account of the Samaritan Pentateuch, see Horne on the Scriptures, vol. II. pp. 12—14.

§ It is true that the ten tribes, as well as those of Judah and Benjamin, were addicted to idolatry; but it appears from 2 Kings iii. 2. x. 21—28. xvii. 28. and 2 Chron. xxxv. 18. that they considered the religion of Jehovah as the only true religion. ¶2 Chron. xvii. 9.

** See particularly Psal. i. 2. xix. 7—11, xl. 7, 8. lxxiv. 13—15, lxxvii. 15

but it could not have been drawn up by him, since the law contained in the Pentateuch forbids many practices of which David was guilty. Samuel who judged Israel about the year B. C. 1100—1060 could not have acquired the knowledge of Egypt which the Pentateuch implies; and Joshua† plainly describes some such book as already extant in his time. Indeed, in the last cited book, there is one passage in particular, which clearly proves that the Pentateuch, or, as the Jews termed it, the 'Book of the Law,' existed in the time of Joshua:—"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do all according to the *law*, which Moses my servant commanded thee,—this *Book of the Law* shall not depart out of thy mouth."‡ The Pentateuch, therefore, can be attributed to Moses alone; and this indirect evidence from tradition is stronger than a more direct and positive ascription, which would have been the obvious resource of fraud. Nor would any writer *posterior* to Moses, who was contriving a sanction for actual laws, have noticed the progressive variations of those institutes‖ as the composer of the Pentateuch has done.§

In addition to the native testimony of the Jews, which has been already stated, respecting the genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch, we have the undisputed testimony of the most distinguished writers of pagan antiquity; which will have the greater weight, as they are generally *prejudiced against* the whole nation of the Jews.

Thus, Manetho, Eupolemus, Artapanus, Tacitus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Justin the abbreviator of Trogus, and Juvenal, besides many other antient writers, *all* testify that Moses was the leader of the Jews and the founder of their laws.¶ The Egyptians, as Josephus asserts, esteemed him to be a wonderful and divine man: and were willing to have him thought a priest of their own, which certainly was a proof of their high opinion of him, though mixed with other fabulous relations.** The great critic, Longinus, extolling those who represent the Deity as he really is, pure, great, and unmixed,†† testifies that thus did the legislator of the Jews who (says he) was no ordinary man, and, as he conceived, so he spoke worthily of the power of God. Numenius, the Pythagorean philosopher, of Apamea in Syria, called Moses a man most powerful in prayer to God, and said, "What is Plato but Moses speaking in the Attic dialect;"‡‡ which sentiment,

—20. lxxviii. 1—55. lxxxi. 4—13. cv. throughout cvi. 1—39. cxxxv. 8—10 cxxxvi. 10—20. and particularly the whole of Psal. cxix

* viii. 31. † Josh. i. 7, 8. also xxiii. 6. ‡ Lev. xvii. and Deut. xii. 5, 27.

‖ Bp. Marsh's Authenticity of the 5 Books of Moses vindicated, pp. 9–10.

§ Bishop Newton has collected all the leading testimonies above noticed, concerning Moses, at length, in his Dessertation on Moses and his Writings. Works, vol i pp. 32—40.

¶ Josephus contra Apion. lib. i. 31.

** Longinus de Sublimitate, § 9. p. 50. ed. 2da. Pearce.

†† Numenius apud Clem. Alexandr. Stromata, lib. i. 22. p. 41. edit. Potter. Eusebius, Præp. Evang. lib. ix. § 6 et 8.

whether just or not, is yet a proof of this philosopher's high opinion of Moses.

Further, Porphyry, one of the most acute and learned enemies of Christianity, admitted the genuineness of the Pentateuch, and acknowledged that Moses was prior to the Phœnician historian Sanchoniathon, who lived before the Trojan war. He even contended for the truth of Sanchoniathon's account of the Jews, from its coincidence with the Mosaic history. Nor was the genuineness of the Pentateuch denied by any of the numerous writers against the Gospel during the first four centuries of the Christian æra, although the fathers constantly appealed to the history and prophecies of the Old Testament in support of the divine origin of the doctrine which they taught. The power of historical truth compelled the emperor Julian, whose favors to the Jews appears to have proceeded solely from his hostility to the Christians, to acknowledge that persons instructed by the Spirit of God once lived among the Israelites; and to confess that the books which bore the name of Moses were genuine, and that the facts they contained were worthy of credit. Even Mohammed maintained the inspiration of Moses, and revered the sanctity of the Jewish laws. Manetho, Berosus, and many others, give accounts confirming and according with the Mosiac history."¶

On this part of the evidence for the authenticity of the books of Moses, the testimonies cannot be expected to be so numerous or express, as for the authenticity of the Gospel Histories; because few writings, sufficiently ancient, are in existence. Notwithstanding similar evidence, though not so full, can be adduced. It cannot be denied but that these books were extant among the captives, while they were at Babylon. This fact was notorious even to heathen opposers. Artaxerxes, in his decree, speaks of the law of God in the hand of Ezra* and Daniel, while in captivity, was provided with a written copy of the Law.† A copy of the Law was found at the repairing of the temple in the reign of Josiah,‡ and during the reign of Jehoshaphat, men were appointed to teach in the cities of Judah, who had the written law with them.‖ Indeed from the beginning of the Jewish nation, the law was appointed to be read at the end of every *seven years, on the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel came to appear before the Lord.*§ Now on the supposition of the Law being written at a later date than the time of Moses, what fraud or artifice could have saved that man from detection and exposure to the punishment due to apostacy, who would have dared to introduce such a law or announce its first public readings, on the *Great Sabbatical Year?* As the *Septuagint* version of the Pentateuch, translated near 300 years before Christ, is the proof of the existence and authority of the Mosiac History at that period, so the *Samaritan Pentateuch*, which we now have in

*Ezra vii. 14. †Dan. ix. 11—13. ‡2 Kings xxii. 8 ‖2 Chron. xvii. 9—. §Deut. xxxi. 9—11. ¶See Horne on the Scriptures vol. I. p. 59.

our hands, is a demonstrative evidence, that the five books of Moses were extant and esteemed authentic, before the Babylonian captivity, or at least before the formation of the Canon by Ezra: for the learned are decisive in pronouncing the *Samaritan character* to be the *ancient Hebrew*, which was supplanted by the *Chaldee*, during the captivity. Now the most rational supposition that can be adopted is, that the Pentateuch or five books of Moses, in the Samaritan, or ancient Hebrew character, is a true and authentic copy, preserved among the ten tribes: for as there has subsisted a fixed antipathy in the Jews against the Samaritans, since their first settlement, in the reign of Ahaz, about 700 years before Christ, there cannot be imagined any coincidence in fraud between the Jews and Samaritans, hence there can be no other date, to which these writings can be assigned, with reasonable probability, but to that ascribed to them by the great body of Jews and Christians.

Josephus * has shown from concessions of Heathen writers, that the laws of Moses were written long before those of any Gentile nation. He observes "in ancient times the name of *Law*, was unknown, and even Homer wanted a word by which to express it. Herodotus says the Phenicians, who accompanied Cadmus, brought letters into Greece, which were formerly unknown to the Greeks, and Eupolemus, quoted by Clemens of Alexandria and Eusebius, affirms, Moses was the first wise man who taught the Jews letters; and that the Phenicians received them from the Jews and the Greeks from the Phenicians: and Diodorus relates, that according to the ancient institution which took place in Egypt, the first who persuaded the people to use written laws, and live agreeably to them, was Moses."†

To the assertion of Lord Bolingbroke that Ezra began, and Simon the Just, finished the received Canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, there can be no great necessity for reply, if his meaning be, that by them the Jewish Scriptures were collected into a volume; for they were perhaps as capable as any others for the undertaking. But we regard as the very desperados of credulity and infidelity, those who would teach or believe these books to have been forged by them. All the Jews who being carried captive to Babylon at the destruction of the Temple, remained only fifty years in captivity: consequently hundreds of them would return to witness the erection of the second temple, and the public readings of the law. And as many of them might have been twenty or thirty years of age at the destruction of the former temple, what notion could they have formed of their leaders, on the return from captivity, had they dared to forge and impose books containing a code of laws never before heard or published? Truly of all credulity, that is the most weak and visionary, which raises its voice against the authenticity and genuineness of the Mosiac and Christian Histories.

* Contra Apion. Lib. 2. † Jamieson's Disser. on the Pentateuch p. 80

"To the proceeding demonstration perhaps the following objection will be made; 'We will admit the force of your arguments, and grant that Moses actually wrote a work called the Book of the Law: but how can we be certain that it was the very work which is now current under his name? And unless you can show this to be at least probable, your whole evidence is of no value.' To illustrate the force or weakness of this objection, let us apply it to some ancient Greek author, and see whether a classical scholar would allow it to be of weight. 'It is true that the Greek writers speak of Homer as an ancient and celebrated poet; it is true also that they have quoted from the works, which they ascribe to him, various passages that we find at present in the Iliad and Odyssey: yet still there is a possibility that the poems which were written by Homer, and those which we call the Iliad and Odyssey, were totally distinct productions.' Now an advocate for Greek literature would reply to this objection, not with a serious answer, but with a smile of contempt, and he would think it beneath his dignity to silence an opponent who appeared to be deaf to the clearest conviction. But still more may be said in defence of Moses than in defence of Homer; for the writings of the latter were not deposited in any temple, or sacred archive, in order to secure them from the devastations of time, whereas the copy of the book of the law, as written by Moses, was intrusted to the priests and the elders, preserved in the ark of the covenant, and read to the people every seventh year.* Sufficient care therefore was taken, not only for the preservation of the original record, but that no spurious production should be substituted in its stead. And that no spurious production ever has been substituted in the stead of the original composition of Moses, appears from the evidence both of the Greek Septuagint, and of the Samaritan Pentateuch. For as these agree with the Hebrew, except in some trifling variations,† to which every work is exposed by length of time, it is absolutely certain that the five books, which we *now* ascribe to Moses, are one and the same work with that which was translated into Greek in the time of the Ptolemies, and, what is of still greater importance, with that which existed in the time of

*And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests and sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the years of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel and in their hearing. And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God. Deut. xxxi. 9—11. 24—26.

† See the collation of the Hebrew and Samaritan Pentateuch, in the sixth volume of the London Polyglott, p. 19. of the Animadversiones Samariticæ.

Solomon.* And as the Jews could have had no motive whatsoever, during the period which elapsed between the age of Joshua and that of Solomon, for substituting a spurious production instead of the original as written by Moses; and even had they been inclined to attempt the imposture, would have been prevented by the care which had been taken by their lawgiver, we must conclude that our present Pentateuch is the identical work that was delivered by Moses.

4. But, besides the external evidence which has been produced in favour of the books in question, equally convincing arguments may be drawn from their contents. The very mode of writing, in the four last books, discovers an author contemporary with the events which he relates; every description, both religious and political, is a proof that the writer was present at each respective scene; and the legislative and historical parts are so interwoven with each other, that neither of them could have been written by a man who lived in a later age. For instance, the frequent genealogies, which occur in the Pentateuch, form a strong proof that it was composed by a writer of a very early date, and from original materials. 'The genealogies† of the Jewish tribes were not mere arbitrary lists of names, in which the writer might insert as many fictitious ones as he pleased, retaining only some few more conspicuous names of existing families, to preserve an appearance of their being founded in reality; but they were a complete enumeration of all the original stocks, from some one of which every family in the Jewish nation derived its origin, and in which no name was to be inserted, whose descendants or heirs did not exist in possession of the property, which the original family had possessed at the first division of the promised land. The distribution of property by tribes and families proves, that some such catalogues of families as we find in the Pentateuch must have existed at the very first division of the country; these must have been carefully preserved, because the property of every family was unalienable, since, if sold, it was to return to the original family at each year of jubilee. The genealogies of the Pentateuch, if they differed from this known and authentic register, would have been immediately rejected, and with them the whole work. They therefore impart to the entire history all the authenticity of such a public register; for surely it is not in the slightest degree probable, that the Pentateuch should ever have been received as the original record of the settlement and division of Judea, if so important a part of it as the register of the genealogies had been known to exist long before its publication, and to have been merely copied into it from pre-existing documents.

'Again, we may make a similar observation on the geographical

* See Walteni Prolegom. xi. § 11.

† Vide Numb. ch. i. ii. & iii. and especially ch. xxvi. and xxxiv.

enumeration of places in the Pentateuch;* the accounts constantly given, of their deriving their names from particular events and particular persons; and on the details of marches and encampments which occur, first in the progress of that direct narrative, when only some few stations distinguished by remarkable facts are noticed, and afterwards at its close, where a regular list is given of all the stations of the Jewish camp. All this looks like reality; whenever the Pentateuch was published, it would have been immediately rejected, except the account it gives of the origin of these names, and of the series of these marches, had been known to be true by the Jews in general, for the book states, that many of these names were adopted in consequence of the events, from the very time they took place; and it also states, that the entire nation was engaged in these marches. Now, the memory of such circumstances as these cannot long exist without writing. If the Pentateuch was not what it pretends to be, the original detail of these circumstances, it could not have been received; for, if it was published long after the events, and there was no pre-existing document of these details, which it delivers as things well known, how could it be received as true? If it was copied from a known pre-existing document, how could it be received as being itself the original? Besides it is natural for the spectator of events to connect ever circumstance with the place where it happened. An inventor of fiction would not venture upon this, as it would facilitate the detection of his falsehood; a compiler long subsequent would not trouble himself with it, except in some remarkable cases. The very natural and artless manner in which all circumstances of this nature are introduced in the Pentateuch, increases the probability of its being the work of an eye-witness, who could introduce them with ease, while to any body else it would be extremely difficult and therefore unnatural; since it would render his work much more laborious, without making it more instructive.

'All these things bespeak a writer present at the transactions, deeply interested in them, recording each object as it was suggested to his mind by facts, conscious he had such authority with the persons to whom he wrote, as to be secure of their attention, and utterly indifferent as to style or ornament, and those various arts which are employed to fix attention and engage regard; which an artful forger would probably have employed, and a compiler of even a true history would not have judged beneath his attention.'†

The frequent repetitions, too, which occur in the Pentateuch, and the neglect of order in delivering the precepts, are strong proofs that it has come down to us precisely as it was written by Moses, at various times, and upon different occasions, during the

‡ Vide Exod. xiv. 2. xv. 27. xvii. 7. And compare Numbers, ch. xx. xxi. and xxxiii. xxxiv. xxxv.; also Deut. i. ii. iii.

† Dr. Graves's Lectures on Pentateuch, vol. I. pp. 50—53.

long abode of the Israelites in the wilderness. Had the Pentateuch been re-written by any later hand, there would in all probability have been an appearance of greater exactness; its contents would have been digested into better order, and would not have abounded with so many repetitions. To these considerations we may add, that no other person than Moses himself could write the Pentateuch; because, on comparing together the different books of which it is composed, there is an exact agreement in the different parts of the narrative, as well with each other as with the different situations in which Moses, its supposed author, is placed. And this agreement discovers itself in *coincidents so minute, so latent, so indirect, and so evidently undesigned*, that nothing could have produced them but reality and truth, influencing the mind and directing the pen of the legislator.*

'The account which is given in the book of Exodus of the conduct of Pharaoh towards the children of Israel is such, as might be expected from a writer who was not only acquainted with the country at large, but had frequent access to the court of its sovereign: and the minute geographical description of the passage through Arabia is such, as could have been given only by a man like Moses, who had spent forty years in the land of Midian. The language itself is a proof of its high antiquity, which appears partly from the great simplicity of the style, and partly from the use of archaisms, or antiquated expressions, which in the days even of David and Solomon were obsolete. But the strongest argument that can be produced to show that the Pentateuch was written by a man born and educated in Egypt, is the use of Egyptian words † which never were nor ever could have been used by a native of Palestine; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that the very same thing which Moses had expressed by a word that is pure Egyptian, Isaiah, as might be expected from his birth and education, has expressed by a word that is purely Hebrew.'†

With regard to the alledged marks of *posterior interpolation*, it must be acknowledged, that there are some such passages, but a *few* insertions can never prove the *whole* to be spurious. We have indeed abundant reason still to receive the rest as genuine: for no one ever denied the Iliad or Odyssey to be the works of Homer, because *some* ancient critics and grammarians have asserthat a *few* verses are interpolations.

The trite objection, drawn from the last chapter of Deuteronomy, where an account is given of the death of Moses, is of on importance whatever, and is rejected as trivial even by those who

* These coincidences are illustrated at a considerable length, and in a most masterly manner, by Dr. Graves in his third and fourth lectures (on the Pentateuch, vol. I. pp. 69—121.) to which we must refer the reader, as the argument would be impaired by abridgment.

† See La Croze Lexicon Egyptiacum, art. Achi and Thebi, and Authenticity of the Five Books of Moses vindicated, pp. 11—14. See also Jahn, Introd. ad Lect. Vet. Fœd. pp. 204—209

contend that the Pentateuch is spurious. The thirty-third chapter of Deuteronomy has evident marks of being the close of the work, as finished by Moses, and the thirty-fourth was added, either by Joshua or some other sacred writer, as a suppliment to the whole, But there are names of cities mentioned in the Pentateuch, which names were not given to those cities till after the death of Moses. For instance a city which was originally called Laish, but changed its name to Dan, after the Israelites had conquered Palestine,* is yet denominated Dan in the book of Genesis.† The book itself therefore, it is said, must have been written after the Israelites had taken possession of the Holy Land. But is it not possible that Moses originally wrote Laish, and that, after the name of the city had been changed, some transcriber, for the sake of perspicuity, substituted the new for the old name? This might so easily have happened, that the solution is hardly to be disputed, in a case where the positive arguments in favor of the word in question are so very decisive."‡

How unfounded and weak are many objections of unbelievers to the authenticity of the Pentateuch? "They have endeavored to prove their assertions by conjectures which have no solidity—granting all they say to be true, it would only follow, that it has happened to Moses's books as to the writings of all ancient authors: there have been added and changed words and names, to render the narrative more intelligible to those who lived in after ages. There are examples of such changes in Homer, Herodotus, and almost all ancient Historians, yet none reject their books on this account.

What can be more rash than to deny a fact, established by formal passages of Scripture, by the authority of Jesus Christ, by the consent of all nations, and by the authentic testimonies of the most ancient writers? What can be more dangerous than to doubt the antiquity, and consequently ruin the authority of those books on which our religion is founded?"‖

We have therefore every possible evidence, that 'the genuine text of the Pentateuch proceeded from the hands of Moses; and the various charges that have been brought against it amount to nothing more than this, that it has not descended to the present age without some few alterations; a circumstance at which we ought not to be surprised, when we reflect on the many thousands of transcripts that have been made from it in the course of three thousand years."§

*Judg. xviii. 22. † xiv. 4.

‡ An example of the same kind is 'Hebron' (Gen. xiii. 18.) which before the conquest of Palestine was called Kirjath-Arba, as appears from Josh. xiv 15. This example may be explained in the same manner as the proceeding.

‖ See Du Pin, Biblioth—Eccles. Disc. prelim.

§ Bishop Marsh's Authenticity of the Five Books vindicated, p. 15. See also Carpzov. Introd. ad Libros Biblicos Vet Test. pp. 38—41. Moldenhawer, Introd. ad Libros Canonicos Vet. et Nov. Test. pp. 16, 17.

We will concludet his article in the animated words of an eminent French Author.

"1. The existence of Moses is a fact which cannot be seriously disputed.—Every people not originally of the land they inhabit supposes an emigration.——Every emigration of an immense colony, supposes a leader.——Every Government founded on a body of laws supposes an ancient Legislator.——And every religion supposes some extraordinary founder. Now it cannot be denied that the Hebrews were transplanted from their ancient country to Judea——that their new establishment was a work of time, labor, wars, and even of prodigies!

"2- The Legislator of the Jews was the author of the Pentateuch, an immortal work, wherein he paints the marvels of his reign with the majestic picture of the Government and Religion which he established.——Who before our modern infidels ever attempted to obscure the incontestible fact? What greater reasons have there ever been to ascribe to Mahommed the Koran, to Homer his sublime poems, to Plato his republic? Rather let us say what work in any age ever appeared more truly to bear the name of its real author? It is not an ordinary book which like many others may be easily hazarded under a fictitious name.——It is a sacred book, which the Jews always read with a sacred veneration, which still remains after seventeen hundred years captivity, exile, calamities, and reproach! In this book the Hebrews included all their sciences; it was their *civil, political, and sacred Code; their only Treasure, their Calendar, their Annals, the only title of their Sovereigns and Pontiffs, the alone rnle of their policy and worship*: and consequently, it must have been formed by their Monarch, and necessarily have the same epoch as their government and religion.

"3. Moses speaks the *truth!* though Infidels charge him with imposture.——Great God! What an impostor must he be, who first spoke of the Divinity, in a manner so sublime that no one since, during four thousand years, has been able to surpass him! —What an impostor must he be, whose writings breathe only virtue, whose style equally simple, affecting, and sublime in spite of the rudeness of those first ages, openly displays an inspiration almost Divine ![†]"

†See Abbé Torné's Sermons, vol. III.

AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

When I speak of the authority of the New Testament, I do it in a general manner and would not be understood to imply, that all the books are of equal authority, nor that every part of any one book, possesses equal claim to credibility. The authority of a book, however, ancient and authentic, must depend, in a great measure, on its own internal evidence, for no book, however esteemed and sacred, can teach what is intuitively false, manifestly absurd, or self contradictory. After the same manner we judge of the particulars contained in an ancient book; for if a part contain either history or doctrine directly opposed to the general scope of the whole, it clearly follows, that part cannot be included in the authentic original, and therefore must be a spurious interpolation or addition. On these just and safe principles, the Christian Church has always proceeded: first in rejecting the many spurious Gospels and Epistles of the first and second centuries, and the apocryphal books of later times.

The question then at issue is, are these books a history of facts which actually transpired, in that time and place to which these writers assign them? Was there a person called Christ who made extraordinary pretentions to a divine commission, and in confirmation of these pretensions, wrought many miracles, and who, after suffering persecutions and martyrdom, ascended from the grave as descisive demonstration of his innocence and divine acceptance.

That such a person as Christ is described in the Gospel History, appeared in Judea, in the reign of Tiberius, the Roman Emperor, whilst Pilate was Governor of Judea, no Jewish, Christian, or heathen writer, ever pretended to deny. On the contrary, there is a unanimous avowal of the fact, by all who have treated of the events of that period. Indeed the very attempt to represent the Great Founder of the Christian Religion, as a Mythological personage, seems a degradation to the character and understanding of the *desperado* who dares to make the hazardous adventure.

It would be absurd to suppose that a governor of a country should keep no public records of remarkable events which occurred during his government: therefore we would naturally expect that some memorials of Christ's accusation and crucifixion would be preserved by Pilate; and such we find to be actually the fact. Eusebius * says; "Our saviour's resurrection being much talked of throughout Palestine, Pilate gave information of it to the Emperor, and also of his miracles of which he had heard; and that being raised up after his death, he was already, by many, believed to be a god." Justin Martyr and Tertullian, both refer to public documents of the above nature, in their apologies for Christianity. Thus, Justin in his first apology for the Christians, present-

* Eccles. Hist. L. 2. C. 2. † Annal. L. 15. C 44.

ed to the Emperor Antonius Pius and the Roman Senate, about the year 140, have mentioned the crucifixion of Jesus and some of its attendant circumstances, adds: that those things were done, you may know from the acts made in the time of Pontius Pilate; and in a subsequent part of the same apology, a similar appeal is made to these acts. Tertullian in his apology, about the year 200 says: "*of all these things relating to Christ, Pilate himself, sent an account to Tiberius then Emperor.*" He farther relates that Tiberius, on receiving the information sent him by Pilate, proposed to the Senate of Rome to have Christ enrolled among the number of their gods, but the Senate rejected the proposal. In the same apology, Tertullian says: "*At the moment of Christ's death, the light departed from the Sun, and the land was darkened at the noonday: which wonder is related in your own annals, and is preserved in your Archives to this day.*"

That such acts of Pilate then subsisted and were known to the Roman people, must be admitted from the language used by these apologists; and the effrontery of these writers, if no such acts then existed, can only be equalled by that which now dares to call their sincerity in question: for who could make such appeals to the very persons possessing those public documents, if no such public acts ever had existed!

But the matter does not rest here: besides the well known testimony of Pliny, we possess that of Tacitus and Suetonius, the Roman Historians: and as in the estimation of unbelievers, any men are honest if they be not Christians, the evidence of Pagan writers of the first rank must receive approbation. Suetonius in his description of the reigns of Claudius and Nero, tells us: "Claudius Cesar expelled Jews from Rome because they raised continual tumults at the instigation of Christ; and that under Nero, the Christians, a people addicted to a new superstition, were severely punished." Now as the persecution by Nero in the year 65 was only about thirty years after the crucifixion, there could be no great time for mythological fancies to obtain credit. Moreover Tacitus in his description of the Christians in Nero's reign, says: "The author of that denomination was Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius, was punished with death, as a criminal, by the Procurator Pontius Pilate."†

Pliny the younger, in his letters to Trojan thus describes the Christians: "They affirm that the whole of their fault or error lay in this, that they were wont to meet together, on a stated day, before it was light, and sing, among themselves, a hymn to Christ as a god; and bind themselves by an oath, not to commit any wickedness. When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate, and then to come together again to a meal, which they ate in common without any disorder." Such is the testimony of Roman Historians and it is farther confirmed by Josephus.*

* See Jewish Antiquities book 18. chap. 3. sect. 3.

The Talmuds acknowledge the preaching, miracles and crucifixion of Jesus as may be seen by reference to Lardner's Jewish Testimonies, and Gregory Sharpe's defence of Christiansty. ——

Lampridius in his life of the Emperor Alexander Severus informs us that the Emperor would have built a temple to Christ, had he not been strongly persuaded to the contrary, by his Pagan friends: and Porphyry, whose words have been preserved by Eusebius, speaks of him as a pious man, whose soul was taken into Heaven. Both Celsus and Julian acknowledged that he wrought miracles; and Hierocles opposed to the miracles of Christ, those of Appollonius Tyaneus: and from Pliny we learn that in the reign of Trajan or beginning of the second century, the Christian faith had made such a progress, in several parts of the Roman Empire, that the temples of the gods were almost desolate.

We must therefore admit as indisputable facts, that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, who founded a sect called by his name, and was crucified at Jerusalem, under Pontius Pilate; that his followers greatly increased after his death, and endured the most severe persecution, on account of their adherence to his religion; for these facts are supported by the testimonies of disinterested witnesses, such as Josephus, Suetonius, Tacitus, and Pliny. We must equally admit, that the historical books of the New Testament, which contain the life of Christ and history of the propagation of his religion in the world, are authentic records; seeing they have always been so considered by the friends and enemies of Christianity: this appears from the treatise of Celsus, an Epicurean Philosophy which he wrote against Christianity, and which was almost entirely transcribed by Origen, in his reply——from that of Julian, a considerable part of which is preserved by Cyril, in his answer——and also from that of Porphyry, large extracts from which were transcribed by Eusebius. These facts cannot be disputed, except on such principles as destroy all human testimony, and invalidate the most certain records of ancient History. Moreover it appears unreasonable to admit the authenticity of the books of Homer, Virgil, Thucydides, and Tacitus, and deny that of the books of the New Testament, since the evidence in favor of the latter, is much greater than that which could ever be produced for the former.

The existence of Jesus as the founder of the Christian Religion, and the authenticity of the Evangelical History as a book containing a memoir of the life, character, and actions of the author of our holy Religion, being admitted, we are prepared to pursue our argument for the credibility and authority of the evidences afforded by such *data.*

The actions, ascribed to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, are of that description, that they COULD NOT *have been recorded, if they had not been true.*

Independently of the miracles performed by Jesus Christ, (which

are fully investigated in a subsequent place) "his general conduct as described by the Evangelists, is that of a person surpassing both in wisdom and in goodness the most perfect character, that was ever drawn by Roman or by Grecian eloquence. The character of our Saviour, as represented by the Evangelists, is not drawn in a *formal* manner, exhibiting at one view the various qualities, of which that character is composed. The character of our Saviour must be learnt by comparing the facts, recorded of him, with the situations, in which he was placed and the circumstances under which he acted. This comparison exhibits unshaken fortitude in the severest trials, calmness undisturbed by provocation, kindness returned for injury, and dignity maintained inviolate through every action of his life. Nor is the wisdom and judgment displayed on every trying occasion less conspicuous in the character of our Saviour. At the same time we perceive the gradual unfolding of a scheme for the general welfare of mankind, a scheme uniform and consistent in all its parts, yet misunderstood *at first* by the Apostles themselves, as being opposed to the general prejudices of the Jews. Facts of *this* description could not have been invented by the Apostles. Plain and unlettered Jews, as the twelve Apostles were, though adequate to the office of recording what they had seen and heard, were incapable of fabricating a series of actions which constitute the most exalted character that ever existed upon earth. If the learning and the ingenuity of Plato or Xenophon might have enabled them to draw a picture of Socrates more excellent than the original itself, it was not in the power of unlettered Jews to give ideal perfection to a character, which was itself imperfect, and to sustain that ideal perfection, as in a dramatic representation, through a series of imaginary events. Indeed it is highly probable, that the Apostles and Evangelists were not *wholly aware* of that perfection, which they themselves have described. For that perfection is not contained in any formal panegyric, expressive of the writer's opinion and indicating that opinion to the reader. It is known only by comparison and by inference. We are reduced therefore to this dilemma. Either the actions, which are ascribed to our Saviour, are *truly* ascribed to him; or actions have been invented for a purpose, of which the inventors themselves were probably not aware, and applied to that purpose by means, which the inventors did not possess. And when we further consider that the plan developed by those facts was in direct opposition to the notion of the Jews respecting a temporal Messiah, we must believe in what was wholly impossible, if we believe, that unlettered Jews could have *invented* them.'*

The character of Jesus is so unlike that of any other person in the whole history of mankind, that the very fact demonstrates that there must have been an original to copy, and also that the disci-

* Bp. Marsh's Lectures, part vi. pp. 71—73.

ples must have written from memory and not imagination. In the discourses of Christ we discern a character much more peculiar than that of Socrates, in the writings of Plato and Zenophon, and also different from that of Moses, which, Jews would probably have imitated. Indeed the very pretensions of Jesus are sufficient to show there was something supernatural in his case. Before him, there had been no prophet in Israel for several hundred years and it does not appear, that the Jews expected any before the coming of the Messiah or his forerunner; and no Jew had ever entertained the idea of extending the peculiar kingdom of God to such as would not conform to the Mosiac institutions. How then could it have occurred to the mind of a Jew, especially one brought up in obscure life, to invert the established order of things, and by assuming more power than any that had ever gone before him, acting and speaking in the name and by the authority of God change the institutions of Moses; and contrary to all the Jewish notions of a Messiah, abolish the peculiarities of their system, disappoint their expectations both civil and religious; and by adapting his religion and kingdom to the circumstances of all nations, extend the benefits and priviliges thereof indiscriminately to all mankind.

"When we consider the prevalence of the Christian religion at this time, the only credible account that can be given of its origin, the fate of its founder and his associates, as attested both by heathen and Christian writers; and that we possess histories by some who were agents in the principal transactions, there can remain no doubt but that a number of persons who appeared at that time, for the sake of propagating a miraculous story, voluntarily sustained great extremeties of ill usage and persecution. That the story, for which these persons exposed themselves to sufferings, was miraculous, clearly appears from the circumstances. That Jesus of Nazareth rather than any other person should be selected as the Messiah, must have arisen from superuatural indications. There were no conquests, no revolutions, no surprising elevation of fortune, no achievements of valor or policy attached to his reputation. A Galilean peasant was announced to the world as a divine lawgiver. A young man of mean condition, and private life, who had wrought no deliverance for the Jewish nation, is notwithstanding declared to be their Messiah. This claim was too absurd to be imagined or credited without some supernatural proofs of his mission. Indeed there was nothing but the miracles attributed to him by which his pretensions could be maintained for a moment. Every controversy, every question must presuppose these, and without citing the miraculous evidence there could have been no place for discussion at all. Moreover that the original story was miraculous, is fairly inferred from the same powers being claimed by the Christians of succeeding ages. If the accounts of these miracles be true, they showed a continuation of

the same powers; if false, they were an imitation founded on the reality of Christs supernatural deeds. Now that the story contained in the present history of the Evangelists, is the same in substance, with that propagated by the eye witnesses of these Miraculous transactions, is manifest from these two facts: there never was a single vestage of any other story, and all testimony, Jewish, heathen, and Christian combinedly bear witness to the originality and identity of the gospel history."

When miracles are alleged in proof of the Divinity of Christ's mission, unbelievers are ready to exclaim absurd, unnatural, and impossible! But the possibility of miracles must be admitted by all that believe Jehovah's Omnipotence, and his sovereignty as Lord of the universe: and as God is already every where present, and continually supports and directs all the laws of nature, to change their course, implies no peculiar exertion. Nor can the admission of supernatural interposition imply any change in the purpose of the Deity, unless it can be proved, that he has decreed not to interrupt those general laws which he has established. Though it be wise and necessary to establish general laws, yet the best systems of theology have always admitted the Divine agency: and, with respect to moral beings, it may become necessary for God to excite their attention to his presence and government, by occasionally deporting from general laws to impress thereby on their minds a just sense of their dependence on his power and providence. When appearances are always constant, and uniform, they cease to attract attention, so that whole nations, ignorant of God, may pass their lives in view of all the wonders of creation, without ever raising their thoughts to the adorable author of universal nature. The more general the corruption of religion and, consequently, the more necessary a divine revelation, the less capable are men of perceiving the internal evidence of the nature and excellence of religion, and therefore they have the more need of external proofs, such as are afforded by miracles. Whereas, if the usual connexion of cause and effect be interrupted and things happen contrary to all experience and expectation, attention is immediately roused, and men will not rest satisfied, without inquiring concerning both the efficient and final cause of so strange an appearance.

No person can reasonably deny that miracles may be of such a nature, number, and continuance, as to yield sufficient attestation to the divine mission of the persons by whom they have been wrought; and also to the authority of those doctrines in confirmation of which they were wrought. Now such were the miracles performed by Christ and his Apostles; and they were, therefore, sufficient to prove to eye-witnesses, the divine origin of the doctrines, in confirmation of which they were performed. These mighty deeds were done in so open a manner, and produced such efects, that the beholders had full assurance of their reality; and be

ing wrought for so benevolent a purpose, they readily recognised the Divine agency, and glorified God who had given such power unto men.——They well knew, that nothing but some superhuman invisible agent, could perform such actions, and seeing the end for which these miracles were performed, they delayed not to ascribe them to the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Hence the miracles of Christ cannot be attributed to an evil agency, for most of them were performed, manifestly, for the most benevolent purposes, nor can the healing of diseases be ascribed to the strength of the patient's imagination; for many of these patients were absent at the time when these cures were performed. Neither can it be denied, but that the account of these miracles and doctrines may have been transmitted to us, in such a manner as to forbid suspicion. To pretend that no such miracles were wrought, is utterly inconsistent with sober investigation: seeing there is no evidence against, and clear unbroken testimony in support of the affirmative. The evidence that the course of nature has been interrupted, is the same with that which must be adduced to prove that it has not: human testimony being witness in both cases; but on the one side the evidence is nothing, on the other we judge it complete.

The various circumstances which concur to authenticate the miracles of Jesus, are worthy of particular regard: "they were wrought by persons who made solemn appeals to God, and often said they would perform them.——They were wrought in a public manner before enemies and unbelievers, in a learned age and in civilized countries——they were wrought not with any air of ostentation, or for the sake of worldly advantage, but in confirmation of precepts and doctrine agreeable to reason and highly beneficial to mankind.——They were wrought at a time when their enemies wanted neither power nor inclination to expose them, if they had been impostures; and were in no danger of being insulted by the populace, or persecuted by the magistrate for ridiculing the Christians and their religion.——These miracles were also numerous and various——they were of a permanent nature, and might be re-examined.——They had nothing fantastical or cruel, but were evidently acts of kindness and benevolence.——Miracles having ceased a long time before Christ appeared, they were therefore calculated to excite the greater attention.——They were foretold by the prophets——were such as the Jews expected from their Messiah.——They were attested by adequate and proper witnesses——admitted by enemies and consequently were the means of converting vast multitudes of both Jews and Gentiles to the belief and reception of Jesus and his religion."*

"Having premised these observations, we offer the following alternative to the mind of every candid inquirer. The first Christ-

* See Chapman's Eusobius, Jortin's "Remarks on Eclesiastical History," and Compbell on Miracles.

ians either delivered a sincere testimony; or they imposed a story upon men which they knew to be a fabrication.

The persecutions to which the first Christians voluntarily exposed themselves, compel us to adopt the first part of the alternative, It is not to be conceived, that a man would resign fortune, and character, and life, in the assertion of what he knew to be a falsehood. The first Christians must have believed their story to be true; and it only remains to prove, that if they believed it to be true, it must be true indeed.

A voluntary martyrdom must be looked upon as the highest possible evidence which it is in the power of man to give of his sincerity. The martyrdom of Socrates has never been questioned, as an undeniable proof of the sincere devotion of his mind to the principles of that philosophy for which he suffered. The death of Archbishop Cranmer will be allowed by all to be a decisive evidence of his sincere rejection of what he conceived to be the errors of Popery, and his thorough conviction of the truth of the opposite system. When the council of Geneva burnt Servetus, no one will question the sincerity of the latter's belief, however much he may question the truth of it. Now, in all these cases, the proof goes no farther than to establish the sincerity of the martyr's belief. It goes but a little way, indeed, in establishing the justness of it. This is a different question. A man may be mistaken, though he be sincere. His errors, if they are not seen to be such, will exercise all the influence and authority of truth over him. Martyrs have bled on the opposites sides of the question. It is impossible, then, to rest on this circumstance as an argument for the truth of either system; but the argument is always deemed incontrovertible, in as far as it goes to establish the sincerity of each of the parties, and that both died in the firm conviction of the doctrines which they professed.

Now, the martyrdom of the first Christians stands distinguished from all other examples by this circumstance, that it not merely proves the the sincerity of the martyr's belief, but it also proves that what he believed was true. In other cases of martyrdom, the sufferer when he lays down his life; gives his testimony to the truth of an opinion. In the case of the Christians, when they laid down their lives, they gave their testimony to the truth of a fact of which they affirmed themselves to be the eye and the ear witnesses. The sincerity of both testimonies is unquestionable; but it is only in the latter case that the truth of the testimony follows as a necessary consequence of its sincerity. An opinion comes under the cognizance of the understanding, ever liable, as we all know, to error and delusion. A fact come under the cognizance of the senses, which have ever been esteemed as infalliable, when they give their testimony to such plain, and obvious, and palpable appearances, as those which make up the evangelical story. We are still at liberty to question the philosophy of

Socrates, or the orthodoxy of Cranmer and Servetus; but if we were told by a Christian teacher, in the solemnity of his dying hour, and with the dreadful apparatus of martyrdom before him, that he saw Jesus after he had risen from the dead; that he conversed with him many days; that he put his hand into the print of his sides; and, in the ardour of his joyful conviction, exclaimed, 'My Lord, and my God!" we should feel that there was no truth in the world, did this language and this testimony decieve us.

"Had Christianity been false, the reputation of its first teachers lay at the mercy of every individual among the numerous proselytes which they had gained to their system. It may not be competent for an unlettered peasant to detect the absurdity of a doctrine; but he can at all times lift his testimony against a fact, said to have happened in his presence, and under the observation of his senses. Now it so happens, that in a number of the epistles, there are allusions to, or express intimations of, the miracles that had been wrought in the different churches to which these epistles are addressed. How comes it, if it be all a fabrication, that it was never exposed? We know, that some of the disciples were driven, by the terrors of persecuting violence, to resign their profession. How should it happen, that none of them ever attempted to vindicate their apostacy, by laying open the artifice and insincerity of their Christian teachers? We may be sure that such a testimony would have been highly acceptable to the existing authorities of that period. The Jews would have made the most of it; and the vigilant and discerning officers of the Roman government would not have failed to turn it to account. The mystery would have been exposed and laid open, and the curiosity of latter ages would have been satisfied as to the wonderful and unaccountable steps, by which a religion could make such head in the world, though it rested its whole authority on facts: the falsehood of which was accessible to all who were at the trouble to inquire about them. But no! We hear of no such testimony from the apostates of that period. We read of some, who, agonized at the reflection of their treachery, returned to their first profession, and expiated, by martyrdom, the guilt which they felt they had incurred by their dereliction of the truth. This furnishes a strong example of the power of conviction, and when we join with it, that is conviction in the integrity of those teachers who appealed to miracles which had been wrought among them, it appears to us a testimony in favour of our religion which is altogether irresistible."

Prophecy has been wisely connected with miracles for they explain and strengthen each other; and Christianity has thereby a growing evidence, acquiring new force by every successive accomplishment, whilst the person to whom these prophecies relate, is more particularly distinguished by the operation and concurring testimony of miracles. We admit that the force of evidence de-

rived from prophecy depends on the assurance that the prophecy was published before the event to which it relates was accomplished and that the words by which the pre diction was made, were sufficiently intelligible and applicable to the event, so as to leave no just cause for doubting of its fulfilment. Now if the nature of the thing predicted, and the causes which lad to its accomplishment be sufficiently remote from human perception, and the event so clearly correspond with the prediction that the application is natural and reasonable, there is the greatest propriety in ascribing the whole to the prescience and power of God. If these events in the history of the New Testament, clearly correspond to predictions in the Old, as there could be no deceitful of coalescence between the Jews and Christians, there arises a reciprocal testimony to the truth and divine authority of both the Jewish and Christian scriptures.

*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until the Shiloh, Messiah or Branch, shall come and to him shall the gathering of the people be.** ——*There shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek* †——*It is a light thing thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob—I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation unto the ends of the earth.* ‡

These prophecies cannot be mistaken. At the birth of Christ, Judea was become a province of the Roman Empire, and almost immediately after the sceptre was totally, and I may say finally, wrested out of the hands of the Jews, But the perspicuity of the above prophecies, to the calling of the Gentile world, and the union of Jews and Gentiles, under the Christian Kingdom, is powerfully striking. It was utterly repugnant to Jewish prejudice, and assumed prerogative to admit the Gentile world to equality of privilege——it was beyond the power of human sagacity to forebode such an event. None but eternal wisdom could predict what infinite goodness had determined in relation to the destinies of mankind under the peaceful, universal empire of Jehovah's anointed. Moreover Is. xi. 10. taken in connexion with Jer. xxiii. 5 and xxxiii. 14 distinctly fixes the lineage of Christ to the house and family of David from which our Lord sprang.

Isaiah so minutely describes the humiliation and character of Christ, ‖ throughout, that it is impossible to misapply the description, for there has been no other person to whose history these predictions correspond. In the tenth verse of the fifty-third chapter, it is foretold that after the death of Christ, he should be raised to life again, behold a numerous and continually increasing offspring, rise as the reward of his sufferings and fidelity, and an ample source of satisfaction and joy for all his labors. Now as there never was a person to whom this description could apply

*Gen. xlix. 10. †Is. xi. 10. ‡Is. xlix. 6. ‖Isa. xxxii. 13—14. and chap. liii.

but to Jesus of Nazareth, the accomplishment of the prophecy in him is, in connexion with his innocent life, and miraculous deeds, decisive testimony that he was the sent of God and the Saviour of the world.

After the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, the old men, who had seen Solomon's temple in all its glory, wept at the completion of the second temple, because it was so vastly inferior to the former; but Haggai consoled them with the promise, that the Messiah should come to that temple and render it more glorious than that of Solomon. This prophecy,* fixes the time of Christ's coming before the destruction of the second temple, which by the Romans under Vespasian, was levelled withthe ground.

These are only a small selection of the Old Testament prophecies, which have been clearly fulfilled in the person of Christ. They therefore afford satisfactory proof of the divinity of his mission, and consequently of the authority of our scriptures; and seeing they have been so manifestly fulfilled, they must have originated from God, and hence, they also prove the authority of the Jewish revelation.

The rise and rapid progress of so remarkable a religion as the Christian, the circumstances in which it made its appearance, the time and manner in which it was promulgated, the invincible patience and fortitude of the primitive Christians, their perseverance in the profession of the gospel, notwithstanding the ridicule and severe persecutions to which they were exposed, both from Jews and Gentiles, and the readiness with which they submitted to martyrdom for their profession are insurmountable obstacles to infidelity and decisive proofs in favor of Christianity. In the gloomy midnight of moral darkness, Christianity like the sun of righteousness, arose refulgent with healing in its wings for an awfully disordered world, and afforded so seasonable and efficient relief from the prevailing superstition and immoralities of mankind, as to induce a belief that it came from the Father of lights, the giver of every good and perfect gift.

Christianity was published in the noblest period of philosophy and probably of science which the world had ever experienced. It was directly opposed to many tenets then supported by the ablest Philosophers and evidently intended to overturn the horrors and impious opinions and practices of the Pagan world, as well as the ceremonial observances of the Jewish nation. It proclaims in a high degree, a war of extermination against all the religious systems, prejudices and rituals of the whole world. It was therefore the avowed enemy of both Jewish and Pagan rights and had the prejudices and education of all mankind to combat; yet unsupported by any worldly power, unpatronized by any Prince or Potentate, and unrecommended by any great name, it prospered in the hands of a few fisher-men headed by a Carpenter, and

* Hag. ii. 4.

under all these disadvantageous circumstances, triumphed over all the combined influence of Jewish and Pagan resistance, and obtained an everlasting name and victory in the annals of the civilized world.

Supported by the evidence of supernatural interposition, and the extraordinary gifts bestowed by Jesus after his resurrection on his disciples and followers, though propagated by the most unlikely instruments, destitute of all worldly advantages, and exposed to reproach and suffering, yet Christianity in that very age, made such surprising progress as to obtain an establishment in the greater part of the known world, which it retains to the present time, Nay: it still spreads and gains new advantages from investigation, triumphing over all the sophistry and ingenuity of its opposers. Such are its evidences, and to suppose such evidences on behalf of deceit and falsehood, involves the most palpable absurdities.

It supposes God would employ his prescience and power to afford testimony to an imposition by a series of illustrious prophecies and uncontrouled miracles, or that a system whose manifest tendency was to destroy vice, idolatry, and superstition, should be carried on and maintained by malevolent beings, contrary to their very nature and character. It is to suppose that persons of apparent great honesty and simplicity could act as the vilest imposters, and be so deceitful and impious as to carry on a series of consummate deception in the name of God, and at the hazard of all that was dear to them; and in manifest opposition to their own worldly interest, persuade the nations to embrace a holy and humiliating institution. Or that they were most extraordinary enthusiasts, carried away by the heat of their own disordered imagination, to believe that for years the most strange and supernatural events past before their eyes, when no such things ever happened; and that they were enabled to perform the most wonderful works in the most open and public manner, though in reality all was a mental delusion, and they had never done any of those miracles which they had fancied themselves to perform.——Finally, it is to suppose that such enthusiasts, though mean, and contemptible, and illiterate, were capable of forming the noblest scheme of religion ever offered to mankind, and to obtain for it credit and influence, triumphed over all the wealth, power, learning, and eloquence in the world; over all the bigotry of prejudice, all the artifice of priests, and all the authority of the magistrates; and that all this was done by alleging a commission in the name of a person, lately crucified at Jerusalem, whom they declared, but without any proof, to have been raised by God from the dead, and exalted as Lord of the world.

Now if Christ and his apostles were not the very weakest of enthusiasts, they must have known whether they were commissioned by God and possessed the power of acting in his name or were de-

ceived. That virtuous men should pretend to act from God, whilst they knew they had no commission, cannot be admitted; hence it follows that if they were not gross enthusiasts they could not be under an illusion themselves, and being good men, showing the most genuine marks of unfeigned reverence for God and truth, they would not attempt to impose upon others. Had there been any fraud, nothing would have been more naturally expected than that the apostles and primitive christians would have exhibited their ambitious designs, or have endeavored to become lords and rulers over the rest of men, but on the contrary, there is not the least appearance of assuming authority, they persist through life as brethren and fellow labourers in their allegiance to their crucified Master, referring all their success and mighty works to the influence of his power, in whose cause they had embarked, and to whose name and religion they felt a ceaseless and uninterrupted devotion.

The Apostles could not be deceived in the facts which they have recorded, neither could they impose upon others, for being men of the strictest integrity and sincerity, they appealed to notorious proofs and suffered every thing for the truth of their narrative.

"*The Apostles could not be deceived in the facts which they have recorded.* This will appear from the following considerations: They were *competent witnesses* of the facts which they attested, and on which the Christian religion is founded. Their testimony did not relate to certain abstract points, in forming a judgment of which they might have been misled by the sophistry of others, or have erred through their own inadvertence and incapacity; nor to events which had happened before their birth, or in a distant region of the earth, concerning which, therefore, they might have received false information. It respected facts which they had witnessed with their eyes and with their ears. They had lived with Christ during his ministry, they had heard his discourses, and seen his wonderful works, and consequently received them on the testimony of their own senses. They all had the same knowledge, and in the same degree, and they agree in the same essential testimony. Now we may seek in vain for any thing of a similar nature in the whole universe.

Moreover, they were not *enthusiasts or fanatics.* The characteristics of enthusiasm or fanaticism are, a blind credulity, in consequence of which its subject is led to imagine himself always to be the favorite of Heaven, and actuated by divine inspiration;—disorder and contradiction in the religious system proposed by the enthusiast;—and obscurity and absurdity in his exposition of it, accompanied with dictatorial positiveness, requiring an implicit credence of his pretensions, or at least on grounds as vain and delusive as those which have satisfied himself;—a morose, unsocial, and severe system of morality;—and contempt of all written revelation. But none of these characteristics is to be traced in the

character of the writings of the apostles. They became the disciples of Jesus Christ upon rational conviction,—not upon internal persuasion alone, but on the irrefragable evidence of clear and stupenduous miracles, proofs submitted to their senses, and approved by their reason, which enthusiasm could not have counterfeited, and never would have required; and at every step of their progress, as their faith was called to signalize itself by new exertions, or to sustain new trials; it was fortified by new proofs. The slowness and caution with which the apostles received the fact of their Lord's resurrection from the dead, fully exempt them from all suspicion of being the dupes of delusion and credulity. Throughout their various writings, the utmost impartiality, sobriety, modesty, and humility prevail. In the most frank and artless manner they do that which enthusiasts never do; they record their own mistakes, follies, and faults, and those of very serious magnitude, acknowledged to be such by themselves, and severely censured by their master. No example of this nature can be found in the whole history of enthusiasm, and no other such example in the whole history of man. Enthusiasts also, in all their preaching and conversation on religious subjects, pour out with eagerness the dictates of passion and imagination; and never attempt to avail themselves of the facts or arguments. on which reason delights to rest. Strong pictures, vehement effusions of passion, violent exclamations, loudly vociferated and imperiously enjoined as objects of implicit faith and obedience, constitute the sum and substance of their addresses to mankind. They themselves believe, *because* they believe, and know *because* they know; their conviction, instead of being (as it ought to be) the result of evidence, is the result of feeling merely. If any one attempt to persuade them that they are in an error, by reasoning, facts, and proofs, they regard him with a mixture of pity and contempt, for weakly opposing his twilight probabilities to their noon-day certainty, and for preposterously labouring to illumine the sun with a taper. How contrary is all this to the conduct of the apostles! When a proof of their mission or doctrine was required of them, they appealed instantly and invariably to arguments, facts, and miracles. These convinced mankind then, and they produce the same conviction now. The lapse of more than seventeen centuries has detected them in no error, and in no degree enfeebled their strength. Their discourses were then, and are now, the most noble, rational, and satisfactory discourses on moral and religious subjects, ever witnessed by mankind. There is not one single instance in them all, in which belief is demanded on any other grounds than these; and on these grounds it is always rightfully demanded: but on these grounds it is never demanded by enthusiasts. There is not in the world a stronger contrast to the preaching of enthusiasts, than that of Christ and his apostles.

Further, the style of fanatics is *always* obscure, arrogant, and

violent. The style of the New Testament is the very reverse of this. The utmost harmony exists through every part of the system of religion inculcated by its authors. The *historical* books are plain, calm, and unexaggerated; detailing the facts that establish the unparalled perfection of their Divine Lord, with the particularity and consistency of truth. Some trifling discrepancies, it is true, are found in the collateral circumstances related by the historians of Jesus Christ, (and this is an evident proof that they did not copy one from another;) but in all essential matters they entirely and perfectly agree: and though scarce one among them had read, or could have read, the writings of the others, yet their histories and doctrines are perfectly accordant. And the epistles, though written at different and distant times, on various occasions, from different places, and addressed to very different communities, and persons, never contradict each other. On the contrary, they are uniformly, in the highest degree natural, rational, and affectionate, admirably adapted to the occasions which produced them, and the relations which their several writers bore to the various churches and persons whom they addressed:—instructing their ignorance, and encouraging their virtues,—rebuking their offences without bitterness,—vindicating their own character from calumny, without betraying any excessive resentment,—and maintaining their own authority, as religious instructors and guides, without any trace of spiritual pride, any arrogant claims to full perfection of virtue. So far are they from inculcating a gloomy devotion, or a morose, unsocial, or selfish system of morality, that, while they insist on necessity of sincere, fervent, and heartfelt piety to God, without any affectation of rapturous ecstacy or extravagant fervour,—a piety, in short, chastened and controlled by humility and discretion,—they at the same time inculcate the strictest equity and justice in our intercourse with our fellow men, together with the purest, most active, and most diffusive benevolence. While the just pre-eminence is allowed to internal sincerity, outward rites and observances have their due importance preserved; every grace, and every virtue, that can form a part of the Christian character, has its just order and value assigned to it in the Christian scheme; every civil, relative, and social duty is taught in the clearest manner, and enforced by the strongest motives. So far are the authors of the New Testament from contemning all written revelation, that in their writings they uniformly evince the greatest reverence for the written revelation of the Old Testament, which they exhort their disciples to study diligently,* and point out its friendly harmony with the Christian system.† And though they insist on the necessity of receiving and believing that system,‡ yet they equally condemn all spirit of persecu-

*2 Tim. iii. 14—17. 2 Pet. i. 19, 20.

† Acts, ii. 14—36. xiii. 15—41. Rom. iv. 10. 19—21, &c.

‡ Acts, iv. 12 Rom. iii. 20—26.

tion,* and religious indifference.† *Neither did they deceive or impose upon others.* The whole tenor of their lives demonstrated, and even their adversaries confessed that they were men of piety and integrity. They never would have pretended to persuade (nor could they have succeeded in persuading) their countrymen and contemporaries, that a man, whose death was public and notorious, was risen again,—that darkness had covered the land at the time of his execution,—and that there had been an earthquake at the moment of his decease,—if these events had not taken place. Besides, when it is recollected that the writers in question were men who had not received a learned education, and who were also of a very humble class in society, it is utterly improbable that they could pretend to speak foreign languages and upbraid an entire and numerous society with making a bad use of the same extraordinary gift, if that society had not received it.‡ Such pretensions, if false, could never have been admitted; and it were absurd, not to say impossible, that so many men should conspire to propagate a falsehood, especially at a time when even attendance on the ministers of Christ, much more the profession of faith, exposed them to the severest persecution and most imminent danger of their lives. Moreover, it rarely happens that any one will propagate a *deliberate falsehood* without having some advantage in view, either immediate or remote. Now the first teachers of Christianity could have no prospect whatever of any advantage. They could expect none from him in whom they professed to believe. Jesus Christ, indeed, had warned them to expect persecution, ignominy, and death in this world, if they continued to be his disciples. They could not therefore aspire to honours or emoluments, for the distribution of these was in the hands of Jews and Heathens, who reviled and persecuted them with unrelenting severity. Still less could they expect to acquire wealth, for their profession of the Christian faith subjected them to the loss of all things. According to their own principles, either as Jews or Christians, they involved themselves in great misery, if they deliberately persevered in propagating falsehoods. Further, if the Evangelists and apostles had confederated to impose upon mankind, it is incredible that none of their associates should not have confessed the fraud before the tribunals. It is equally incredible that so many precepts of piety and virtue should have been delivered by men of such

* Rom. xiv. 3—23.

† Dr. Graves's Essay on the Character of the Apostles, to prove that they were not enthusiasts, *passim*; Dr. Less on the Authenticity, &c. of the New Testament, pp. 280—299: by both of whom the topics above glanced at are fully and ably illustrated. Lord Lyttleton has also applied similar considerations to the conversion of Saint Paul, which he has shown to be an irrefragible argument for the truth of the Christian religion. See his "Observations on the Convertion of Saint Paul,"—an inestimable little treatise, to which scepticism could never frame a reply.

‡ As Saint Paul upbraid the church at Corinth. See 1 Cor. xiv.

abandoned principles, as they must have been if they had been imposters; and it is still more incredible that they should have been willing to die for the cause of Christ, who, if he had not risen again from the dead: would have miserably deceived them. Still less is to be credited that they performed miracles (the reality of which was acknowledged by their enemies) in confirmation of their doctrine. Lastly, if the apostles and evangelists had designed to impose upon mankind, they would have accommodated themselves to the humours of the people whom they addressed; they would have indulged their passions, and would carefully have avoided saying or doing any thing that might shock or offend them. Nothing of the kind was done by the apostles. They did not accommodate themselves to the dispositions of mankind; they boldly impugned the traditions of the Jews, and the religion of the Gentiles; nor would they suffer the law to be confounded with the Gospel, or the Mosiac ceremonies to be retained. They spared not the corruptions that prevailed in their time; they sought not to clothe their discourses or writings in the attractive garb of human eloquence, nor did they gratify the passions of their hearers. Would persons, deliberately confederating to impose upon the world, have pursued a conduct so little calculated to secure success to their designs? And as the evangelical historians were neither deceived nor imposed upon themselves, nor did deceive or impose upon others, so neither could they have successfully carried on such deceit or imposition, if they had been ever so much disposed or desirous to do it. For, as we have already had occasion incidentally to remark, the facts recorded by them were *public* facts. They were not done in a corner, but performed openly; and were openly related before all mankind. They were declared, not merely to the ignorant and illiterate, but to men of learning, leisure, sagacity, and power. Thousands *could* examine the truth of their story, and were under obligations to examine it; and if it had been false, to refute it. The importance and strangeness of the subjects thus announced would naturally excite curiosity; and on this account it would certainly be examined by multitudes. If the report of the apostles and evangelists had not been true, it would have been the most ridiculous that can be imagined. If it were true, it was the most important that ever sounded in the ears of mortals. He must therefore be a strange man indeed, who could hear such things reported and repeatedly asserted (in whatever light he might consider them,) without investigating the truth of them, the grounds on which the report was made, and the evidence on which it was confirmed. So far, however, were the apostles from being either deceived themselves or deceivers of others, that they were *men of the strictest integrity and sincerity.*

This is evident from the style and manner of their writings, which are characterised by the most rigid impartiality and fideli-

ty. They were not ambitious of being known to the world by their writings, but only as they were induced by necessity, for the further propagation of the Gospel.* There is no preparation of events; there are no artful transitions or connexions; no set characters of persons to be introduced; no reflections on past actions or on the authors of them: no excuses or apologies for such things, as a writer might probably foresee would shock and disturb his readers; no specious artifices, no plausible arguments to set off a doubtful action, and reconcile it to some other, or to the character of the person that did it. In short, it does not appear that it ever entered the minds of these writers, to consider how this or the other action would appear to mankind, or what objections might be raised against it. But without at all attending to such a consideration, they lay the facts before the world, at no pains to think whether they will appear credible or not. If the reader will not credit their testimony, there is no help for it: they tell the truth and nothing else. Greater marks of sincerity than these it is imposible to find in any historical compositions that are extant; and they show that they published nothing to the world but what they believed themselves. They never attempt to astonish their readers, but uniformly endeavour to enlighten and convince them: regardless of themselves, they seem engrossed by the great truths, which they were commissioned to promulgate. They do not dissemble certain circumstances in the life and sufferings of their master, which have no tendency to enhance his glory in the eyes of the world; such are the low circumstances of his parents,—the mean accommodations of his birth,—that when he appeared publicly to the world, his townsmen and near relations dispised and rejected him,—that few among his followers were men conspicuous for wealth, dignity, or knowledge,—that the rulers, the scribes and pharises, disowned his pretensions and opposed him continually,—that some who for a time followed him, afterwards deserted him,—that he was betrayed into the hands of the high priests and rulers by one of those who had been selected for his constant companions,—and that he was crucified in the most ignominious manner with two malefactors. Had they been silent concerning such events, their adversaries assuredly could never have discovered them, nor, consequently, have taken any advantage of them. They have, however, not failed to relate them with all their minutest circumstances. Impostors would certainly have acted differently. They would either have kept back such facts as appear so disrespectful to their leader; or they would have endeavoured to assign some cause, in order to obviate any bad impression, that might arise from them. They would enter into a laboured detail of the intellectual endowments or moral excellencies of their master. But the evangelists do no such thing. They utter no lofty panegyrics; they pronounce no eloquent en-

*Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. L. iii. C. 23.

comiums. They depart from the common line of historians, and give an artless narrative of every circumstance, however apparently unfavorable to their master, leaving truth to support itself.

Again, when they relate any of the miracles of Jesus Christ, they announce them with the same dispassionate coolness as if they had been common transactions; saying nothing *previously* to raise expectation, nor, *after the recital of them*, breaking out into exclamations, but they always leave the reader to draw his own conclusion. Does he confound and triumph over his enemies? We see no symptoms of exultations. Is he in the lowest distress? On their parts we can collect no tokens of fear, or grief, or indignation. Do they record his giving sight to the blind, restoring the lame, feeding many thousands with a few loaves and fishes, calming the raging sea, and even raising the dead? They seem perfectly calm and unconcerned. Do they narrate his resurrection and ascension? They afford no explanation of any difficulties; they never offer a single argument to enforce their credit; they leave the bare facts with their readers, who may receive or reject them as they please. In perusing the simple and unadorned narratives of the Evangelists, it is impossible not to feel that the purport of their writings was to bear witness of the truth.

All histories written by authors of equal credit, agree in the main, but differ in things of less importance: at least there will be a variety in their manner of relating the same event and this variety shows them to be independent witnesses. Their attention will have been arrested principally by the facts of greatest consequence, and their agreement will therefore be greater in the important parts of the narrative than in those of comparatively little value: thus we find the histories of the Evangelists harmonize in the essential facts, precepts and doctrines, but in non-essentials there appears considerable variety. Now as the Evangelists agree in all the principal facts, though their histories be arranged in a different order, and differ considerably in trivial matters, it follows that they wrote from memory, and not in concert. Each appears to have written what struck him the most forcibly, and what seemed the most proper to make us acquainted with the character and doctrines of Jesus Christ. They are only careful to give them upon the best authority, either from their own personal knowledge, or as they had them from those, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word. Like honest and faithful historians, they are concerned about nothing but the truth. In their histories, you meet with just such accounts as you may naturally expect from different observers of the same fact. No two men of equal capacity and attention, ever yet related the same fact precisely in the same manner and words. Without the smallest prejudice or partiality, and with the strictest regard to truth, they will give you the circumstances of the same action with considerable difference.

The inferences, then, that we have a right to draw from this apparent honesty and impartiality of the sacred historians are, First, that the Gospel bears all the marks of a true history, and that the differences and trifling disagreements among the historians, are a strong evidence of the truth of the whole. It is much more likely to be true, than if the whole had been transmitted to us by a single writer of the greatest ability. Though we meet with differences and difficulties in the relation of some material facts, yet none of these difficulties effect the main cause, or the leading principles of our religion. We are left in the full possession of all these. They all agree that Jesus Christ was upon this earth, that he was a divine teacher, and a great example, that he died and rose again. On the contrary had they been all uniform in their narration, we should have had good cause to suspect fraud and collusion. Had they in relation of each particular sermon, prayer, and great work, expressed themselves in the very same words, would not unbelievers have found good cause to allege, 'these men are no more but copyists of one another, a company of men under the pretended direction of the spirit of truth, imposing a most impudent fraud on the world.'

These differences bear all the marks of candour, of honesty, and integrity. We know from them, that Jesus Christ was on this earth, that he wrought great works, that he delivered remarkable prophecies, that he died and rose again, that his disciples, immediately after his resurrection, with firmness embraced his cause; and in obedience to his last commands, went out and baptized all nations. We know, in short that he brought life and immortality to light, and placed our hopes upon the best foundation. Let the learned, then, settle lesser differences, and let cavillers dispute about dark expressions and darker tenets, we will hold fast by the main pillars; and if the world itself should sink, these will support us; this is our joy and rejoicing: in the strength of this, let us march onward towards heaven."

There is no subject in which the triumph of the Christian argument is more conspicuous than the moral qualifications which give credit to the testimony of its witnesses. We have every possible evidence that there could be neither mistake nor falsehood in their testimony; a much greater evidence than can actually be produced to establish the credibility of any other historian. Bring for example, Tacitus and the New Testament to an immediate comparison, subject them both to the touchstone of ordinary and received principles, and it will be found that the latter leaves the former out of sight, in all the marks and characters of authentic History. The evidence of the Gospel history stands exalted above that of every other volume in the concurrence of its numerous, distant, and independent authors—in the uncontradicted authority which it has maintained from the earliest times of the church—in the total inability of its bitterest adversaries to im-

peach its credibility—in the genuine characters of honesty and fairness which it carries on the very face of it; in these and in every other thing that can give validity to the written history of past times, there is a weight and splendor of evidence unparalleled by that of any other production in the world.

"Since the accounts the Evangelists have given us in their writings are things which they say and heard themselves or had from those who did so, since they lived in the time and place, when and where, the things of which they write, were publicly transacted, their writings deserve greater credit than any other writings whatever. For how few of those things, related by other historians, are such as they themselves, being present, saw?—Tis needless to mention, Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Livy, Suetonius, Curtius, and other historians, who have given us an account of the Assyrian or Persian, the Greek or Roman affairs; and who have written of things that were done many ages before they were born, and in such parts of the world as were very remote from their own habitations. I shall only instance in one writer, and that is Cornelius Tacitus, in that part of his history, where he gives an account of the destruction of Jerusalem, and takes occasion to tell us the whole story of the city and the Jewish people from their first beginning. Tis scarce credible, how many groundless and childish tales, what stupid and evidently false accounts that celebrated historian has heaped together, and which he might easily have known to be such—even in Rome itself where he lived, from the number of Jews of all ranks who resorted thither, and especially from the history of Josephus, which at the Emperor's command, had been deposited in the public library."

If, from the consideration of the narratives of the evangelical historians concerning their master, we proceed to whatever is recorded concerning themselves, we shall find the same integrity and fidelity every where prevail. When Cicero had offended against the capital law of his moral code—that which enjoined the love of his couutry—first, by his backwardness to join the camp of Pompey, and afterwards by his prompt submission to the tyranny of Cæsar, what was the conduct of that illustrious Roman on this pressing occasion? Did he frankly condemn those false steps, or did he content himself with the simple relation of them? He did neither of these things. He softened and disguised the truth; and employed all his wit and eloquence to palliate this inglorious desertion of principle to himself and others. What a striking contrast is this to the ingenuousness of the evangelical writers! They study no arts of evasion or concealment. They honestly acknowledge not only the lowness of their station, but also the meanness of their original employments, the indigence of their circumstances, the inveteracy of their national prejudices, the slowness of their apprehension under so excellent a teacher, the weakness of their faith, the ambition of some of the disciples, the

intolerant temper of others, and the worldly views of all. They even tell us of their cowardice in deserting their master when he was seized by his enemies, and that after his crucifixion they all resumed their secular employments—for ever resigning those hopes which they so fondly cherished, and abandoning the cause in which they had been so long engaged; notwithstanding all the proofs that had been exhibited, and the conviction which they had before entertained, that Jesus was the Messiah, and that his religion was from God. They mention, with many affecting circumstances, the incredulity of one of their associates, who was not convinced of the reality of their Lord's resurrection but by occular and sensible demonstration. They might have concealed their own faults and follies from the world; or, if they had chosen to mention them, they might have alleged plausible reasons to soften and extenuate them. But they did no such thing: they related, without disguise, events and facts just as they happened, and left them to speak for themselves. In like manner, when recording the exercise of the miraculous powers with which they were endowed, they relate those astonishing facts, without any ornaments of language, in the most concise and simple manner. They do nothing, they assume nothing, in their own character. In short, they speak with such certainty, with so much self-conviction, and with such confidence in the truth of their history, that assuredly we can no longer depend on any historian whatever, if we entertain the least doubt concerning the integrity of the writers of the New Testament. And if we compare their merits as historians with that of other writers, we shall be convinced that they are inferior to none who ever wrote, with regard to knowledge of persons, acquaintance with facts, candour of mind, or reverence of truth.*

Lastly, in the epistles of the apostles which have been transmitted to us, there are preserved memorials of many particulars which are not very honorable to the first converts to Christianity. Such are the readiness of the churches of Galatia to depart from the purity and simplicity of the Gospel;—the scandalous disorders of the church of Corinth in some solemn parts of their worship; the contentions among them in behalf of their teachers; the preposterous use of the gift of tongues, proceeding from vanity and ostentation; and the unaccountable conceits of others, who depended upon an empty faith without works, and speculative knowledge without a suitable holy practice, referred to in the epistles of James and John. Upon the whole, it is most evident from the facts that were disadvantageous to Christ himself, to the writers themselves, and also to the first Christians, that those persons from whom we have received these accounts had a particular regard to truth, and preferred its interest to all selfish considerations.

* Bonnet, Œuvres, tom. x. pp. 498—501. Dr. Hales's Analysis of Chronology, vol. ii. p. 693. Dr. Harwood's Intro. to the New Test. vol. i. p. 6—10.

Moreover they appealed to notorious and incontrovertible proofs.

Whatever internal marks of credibility the evangelical writings possess (and which could not but carry conviction to those to whom they were addressed,) their authors confirm the veracity of their statements by an appeal to the miracles wrought by themselves, and to the extraordinary gifts conferred by them uponmany other persons. This is evident from their epistles, which were written and directed to those who had beheld those miracles, and had participated in those gifts, and which also contain reproofs for the mismanagement of such gifts, and various directions respecting the better use and employment of them.* If these persons had not received such gifts, would this mode of writing and arguing have recommended the persons or doctrines of the apostles to them, who were declining from both? Would they not have contradicted the apostles, as asserting deliberate falsehoods? But this was never attempted. 'Nothing in the situation of the New Testament writers, leads us to perceive that they had any possible induce ment for publishing a falsehood.

We have not to allege the mere testimony of the Christian writers, for the danger to which the profession of Christianity exposed all its adherents at that period. We have the testimony of Tacitus to this effect. We have innumerable allusions, or express intimations, of the same circumstances in the Roman historians. The treatment and persecution of the Christians makes a principal figure in the affairs of the empire; and there is no point better established in ancient history, than that the bare circumstance of being a Christian, brought many to the punishment of death and exposed all to the danger of a suffering, the most appalling and repulsive to the feelings of our nature."

The credibility of the Old and New Testament is further attested by the principal facts, contained in them, being confirmed by certain commemorative ordinances, or monuments of great celebrity, that existed among the Jews and Christians from the time when the events took place, which they are said to commemorate, and which ordinances or monuments subsist to the present day, wherever Jews or Christians are to be found.

Circumcision is the seal of the covenant with Abraham, the great progenitor of the Jews, on all whose posterity it was enjoined. This rite was adopted by the Egyptians, Colchians, the Ethiopeans of Africa, the Phænicians, and one or two other ancient nations; but though its high antiquity ascended beyond the records of the Pagans, no particular reason was assigned for it, except that some professed their adherence to it for the sake of cleanliness. Now it is this precise want of reason which constitutes the grand difference between the circumcision of the Gentiles and that of the Israelites. In the case of the Gentiles it proved no one histor-

* See 1 Cor. i. 4. 5, v. 3—5. xii. xiii. 8. xiv. 1—33. 2 Cor. xii. 7—11. Gal. iii. 5. 1 Thes. i. 5.

ical fact: in the case of the Israelites, it proved the important historical fact that Abraham was commanded to adopt the rite, and to hand it down to his posterity, as a badge of their being, in certain chosen lines, the peculiar people of Jehovah. This fact, which is a vital one in the Mosaic history, it decidedly and incontrovertibly establishes. For though the Israelites, like any other nation, might have simply adopted the rite of circumcision, yet they could not have adopted it as a commemorative ordinance, professing to commence from the time when the commemorated fact occurred, unless that the fact really had occurred. The reason is obvious. If the belief, associated with the rite, had commenced at any given point of time subsequent to the adoption of the rite itself, the persons, who first embraced the belief must unaccountably have suffered themselves to be persuaded, not only that such was the origin of the rite, but that they and their fathers before them, from the very time of its primeval institution, always knew and believed that such was its origin.*

The *Passover* was instituted to commemorate the protection of the Israelites, when all the first-born of the Egyptians were destroyed, and their deliverance from bondage in Egypt, which was its immediate consequence. To this was added the solemn consecration of the first-born of man and beast to God; and, in further commemoration of the destruction of the first-born of the Egyptians, the tribe of Levi was set apart. The month in which this feast was solemnised, from being the seventh, was reckoned as the first month of the year, in order to mark it as the æra of this illustrious deliverance. The passover was eaten, with bitter herbs, to remind the Israelites of their severe bondage and servile food in Egypt:—with unleavened bread, because the Egyptians, in their terror, urged them to depart, and would not allow them time to leaven their bread, *for they said we be all dead men.* And it was likewise eaten in the posture of travellers just prepared for a journey, to mark its having immediately preceded their sudden and final departure from the house of bondage.

The *Feast of Tabernacles* was instituted to perpetuate the deliverance of the Israelites, and their journeying in the desert. On this occasion they were commanded to dwell in tabernales or booths, "made of the boughs of goodly trees." And,

The *Feast of Pentecost* was appointed fifty days after the passover, to commemorate the delivery of the Law from Mount Sinai, which took place fifty days after their departure from Egypt. At this festival, which was celebrated at that season of the year when their harvest usually closed, each head of a family was enjoined by the Jewish law to take some of the first fruits of the earth, and bring it to the place which the Lord should choose, and to set it down before the altar of the Lord, making the solemn acknowl-

* Faber's Horæ Mosaicæ, vol. i. pp. 337—341.

edgment of the whole series of peculiar and miraculous providences experienced by the nation, which is prescribed in Deut. xxvi. 5—10.

Now all these institutions have been held sacred among the Jews in all ages, since their appointment, and are solemnly and sacredly observed among them to this day. Can these observances be accounted for, on any principle but the evidence of the FACTS, on which they were founded?

In like manner, the principal facts contained in the Gospels are confirmed by monuments, which subsist to this day among Christians, and which are the objects of men's senses. These monuments are the ordinances of Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the festival observed on the first day of the week.

It is a well-known FACT, that, in all countries where the Christian faith is held, its professors are initiated by *Baptism;* and that, by submitting to this rite, they renounce every other religious institution, and bind themselves to the profession of the Gospel alone. Now Baptism, being performed in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, plainly signifies the firm persuasion of the Christian church that their religion is from God, the fountain of all good; that it was published to mankind by Jesus Christ the Son of God, the voluntary messenger of this dispensation; and that it was confirmed by many great signs, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Particularly, on the part of those who administer this rite, it signifies that they act agreeably to the will of the Father who appointed the Christian religion, and by express commandment from him, and from his Son who published it, as well as from the Holy Spirit, who confirmed it, when they baptise men into the belief and profession of Christianity. On the part of God, this rite is a declaration, by his ministers, that he accepts and pardons the baptised person, provided he gives the answer of a good conscience, and in his subsequent life acts agreeably to the obligations of baptism. And lastly, on the part of the baptised, their receiving of this rite is understood to be an affectionate and solemn public declaration of *their* sense of the relation in which they stand to God the Father as their Creator, to his only Son as their Redeemer, and to the Holy Spirit as their Sanctifier, according to the views which the Christian religion gives of these relations; and also of their firm resolution faithfully to perform all the duties resulting from these relations.

That the *Lord's Supper* is often celebrated in all Christian countries, is a FACT that cannot be questioned: neither can it be questioned, that Christians consider this rite to be essentially connected with the profession of their religion. Our fathers entertained the same opinion of its importance; and their fathers viewed it in the same light. But what claims and deserves particular notice with reference to this institution is, that by the common consent of Christians now living, and of all in former ages of whose opinion

we have any knowledge, the importance of the Lord's supper arises from its being a commemoration of the life, sufferings, death, and resurrection, and final coming of the founder of their religion, and from its having been expressly enjoined to all his disciples by his dying request, with a view to perpetuate the memory and demonstate the truths of these events.

The stated observance of the *First Day of the Week*, as a sacred festival in honor of Christ's resurrection from the dead—on which day Christians abstain from all secular labors and affairs, and hold solemn assemblies for the public worship of God—preserves that grand event from falling into oblivion.

Now, as these monuments perpetuate the memory, so they demonstrate the truth, of the facts contained in the Gospel history beyond all reasonable contradiction: because, unless the events of which the Christian rites are commemorations, had really existed, it is impossible to conceive how those rites could have come into general use. For, if Jesus Christ neither lived, nor taught, nor wrought miracles, nor died, nor rose again from the dead, it is altogether incredible that so many men, in countries so widely distant, should have conspired together to perpetuate such a series of falsehoods, by commencing the observation of the institutions of Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Lord's day: and it is equally incredible that, by continuing to observe them, they should have imposed those falsehoods on posterity.

The necessity of a Divine Revelation renders it very probable that men have received Divine information. The possibility of such a communication is so manifest as to preclude all discussion on that subject. The chief opposers of the Christian revelation have admitted that when men are sunk in gross ignorance and debased by error and corrupt habits, God may kindly interpose by a special application of his power and providence, and reveal such useful truths as may tend to reform their lives and excite them to obedience by proper motives. Now not only the history of human degradation at the time of Christ, but that of all ages and nations on which the sun of Righteousness has not darted his vivifying and enlightened rays, abundantly testify that mankind greatly needed a help from God to enable them clearly to understand their relationship and duty to him as their Creator, preserver and Saviour. And all the systems of doctrines and morality in the world, produced by man, unaided by celestial illumination, are so puerile, heterogeneous and insignificant as to prove a revelation was necessary.—Wherein consists man's true happiness, by what rites the Deity would be worshipped, the design and tendency of his government, his unity and moral character, and man's final destiny were almost totally unknown to the world, and if better known now, the advance is principally owing to the light of Diviner evelation upon the human mind, or the reflections of that illumination.

If the religion of nature be written with sufficient strength and perspicuity on every man's heart, why might not an Indian or Chinese form as good a system of religion as a Christian; and if so, why has it never been produced? If we select the systems of Confucius, Zoroaster, Socrates, and Plato, the greatest Moralists ever an unenlightened world could boast, we find them blended with so much superstition and absurdity, as to defeat their main design. Men who only begin to think of these subjects, after they arrive at the age of maturity, do not sufficiently consider, whence they derived their views of religion; and thinking the whole system very natural, are apt to conclude it must have been known to all men. But the fact is, the knowledge of men on those subjects is derived from instruction, and therefore no man is capable of duly estimating the extent of his own powers. For the solution of this question we must have recourse to the testimony of history, and thereby ascertain what mankind has been able to attain, in a variety of circumstances. Now it appears from the most careful investigation, that all the useful and practical knowledge of religion, of which we find any traces among the Greeks and Eastern nations, was, by their own confession, derived from their ancestors; for the Greeks acknowledge their religion and wisdom to have been received from persons who arrived from the East in Greece by way of Thrace. But the celebrated wisdom of the East and even of the earliest Greeks, consisted in delivering the traditions of the ancients, and it was a long time before men began to reason about religion or morals. The purest notions therefore of religion, were handed down from the first parents of mankind, who received them from the Creator, to their offspring; but became still more and more corrupt, notwishstanding improvement in taste and science, till heaven was pleased again to interpose in the promulgation of the Christian religion, through the instrumentality of Christ and his apostles.

It being manifest from the circumstances and history of the world, that a divine revelation was needed, and being naturally inferred that the Father of mankind would, in benevolence, interpose on behalf of his intelligent offspring, with a view to reclaim them from their vice and errors; and as there is no other religion now in the world but the Christian that can make so just a pretence to a divine origin, and moreover, seeing it has, in its pimitive simplicity, as taught in the Evangelists, all the marks of a divine communication, from the reasonableness of its doctrines, the superexcellence of its morals, the efficience of its motives, and its manifest design, the glory of the Creator and happiness of the creature, we legitimately and reasonably conclude that Christianity is what it has always professed to be, a divine communication from the Father of lights, for the instruction and comfort of mankind universally.

The superexcellent nature of these books affords no small proof of their divine authority. The parables of the New Testament, would do honor to any book in the world, if not in style, certainly in the choice of subjects, and in propriety and structure of the narratives, in their pathos and simplicity, which could only be the fruit of a well cultivated judgment. The Lord's prayer for a composition of the kind, stands without a rival, in the whole series of human productions: and that one precept of Jesus, taken from his sermon on the mount: "all things, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," is of itself a system of morality which eclipses all human systems that ever existed in the world, as far as the bright luminary of meridian day, outshines the veriest taper that glimmers in a solitary chamber. Whence then came these excellent compositions? Was Jesus a famous Philosopher, or the early Christians consummate scholars? Nay, no specimens of composition which the first christians have left us, authorize us to believe that they were equal to the task: and how little qualified the Jews were to assist Christ in the undertaking, will be easily learned from their tradditions and writings which were the nearest to that age. The whole collection of the Talmud is one continued proof, into what follies they descended whenever they left their bible; and how ill qualified they were to furnish such lessons as were delivered by the Master of Christians. Christianity, if we except the writers of the New Testament, could not boast of a single production above mediocrity before the days of Justin, an hundred years after the death of Christ: but it is well known that the Christian scriptures were completed long before his time, and, as he himself declares "*read daily in the churches, and Christian assemblies.*" Now as it cannot be shown that any book in the New Testament was composed after the destruction of Jerusalem, sixty years before the accession of the heathen Philosophers, we fairly conclude, that Christianity, being first promulgated by Jews, who were proverbially slow of understanding, derived its origin from heaven, agreeably to the testimony of its first propagators.

The confession of Infidels may be here introduced with advantage. "I will confess to you," says Rousseau, "that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel has its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction, how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Scripture! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manners! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery? Whatsublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind in his re-

plies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness, and without ostentation?—When Plato described his imaginary good man with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ: the resemblance was so striking that all the Christian fathers perceived it.

"What prepossession, what blindness must it be to compare (Socrates) the son of Sophroniscus to (Jesus) the son of Mary! What an infinite disproportion is there between them! Socrates, dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was any thing more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice; he had only to say, therefore, what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precept.—But where could Jesus learn among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality, of which he only has given us both precept and example?—The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophising with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excrutiating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes! if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God. Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friends, it bears not the mark of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which no body presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty, without obviating it: it is more inconceivable, that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."

"In Christ, we have an example of a quiet and peaceable spirit, of a becoming modesty and sobriety, just, honest, upright, and sincere; and, above all, of a most gracious and benevolent temper and behaviour. One, who did no wrong, no injury to any man, in whose mouth was no guile; who went about doing good not only by his ministry, but also in curing all manner of diseases among the people. His life was a beautiful picture of human nature in its native purity and simplicity; and showed at once what excellent creatures men would be, when under the influence and power of that gospel which he preached unto them."*

*Chubb's True Gospel of Jesus Christ, sect. 8.

Bolinbroke says, "No religion ever appeared in the world whose natural tendency was so much directed to promote the peace and happiness of mankind as Christianity.—No system can be more simple and plain, than that of natural religion as it stands in the Gospel. The gospel is in all cases one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence and of charity."—Paine asserts that "Jesus Christ was a virtuous and amiable man; that the morality which he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind; that, though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius, and by many good men in all ages, it has not been exceeded by any."—Such are the strange concessions of Infidels.

The following extract from the Evangelical Demonstration of Eusebius,* may not be unacceptable, being the language of an able advocate of Christianity, within three centuries of its foundation.

"Is it a thing possible to conceive that deceivers and unlearned men should ever attempt so extravagant a thing, as to travel over nations, accomplish their design and establish their doctrine, in all parts of the world? How strange to suppose that they should, in no respect disagree one from another, in the account they give of the actions of Christ? If in all questions of fact and in all trials at law, the agreement of several witnesses is always accounted sufficient to determine, satisfactorily, the matter in question, is it not abundant evidence of the truth, in this case, that twelve apostles, seventy disciples, and innumerable other believers have born witness to the actions of Christ, with exact and perfect agreement among themselves; and not only so but have endured all kinds of torments and even death itself to confirm their testimony; no one, being terrified at the death of others, ever forsook his companions or ever preached contrary to them and detected the fraud? Nay, on the contrary, that one, who forsook his Master in his life time, and betrayed him to his enemies, being self-condemned, destroyed himself."

The history of the Gospel, stands distinguished from all other history by the uninterrupted nature of its testimony, which carries down its evidence, without a chasm, from its earliest promulgation to the present day. We do not speak of the superior weight and splendor of its evidences, at the first publication of that history, as being supported, not merely by the testimony of one, but by the concurrence of several independent witnesses. We do not speak of its subsequent writers, who follow one another in a far closer and more crowded train, than there is any other example in the history of the literature of the world. We speak of the strong though unwritten testimony of its numerous proselytes, who, in the very fact of their proselytism, give the strongest possible confirmation to the Gospel, and fill up every chasm in the evidence of past time.

It may be observed, that in pursuing the line of continuity from

*Book 3 chap. iii.

the days of the apostles, the written testimonies for the truth of the Christian miracles follow one another in closer succession, than we have any other example of in ancient history. Indeed every convert to the Christian faith in those days, gives one additional testimony to the truth of the Gospel history. Is he a Gentile? The sincerity of his testimony is approved by the persecutions, the sufferings, the danger, and often the certainty of martyrdom, which the profession of christianity incurred. Is he a Jew? The sincerity of his testimony is approved by all these evidences, and in addition to them by this well known fact, that the faith and doctrine of Christianity were in the highest degree repugnant to the wishes and prejudices of that people.

Every sentence in a Christian father, expressive of respect for a book in the New Testament, is also expressive of his faith in its contents. It is equivalent to his testimony for the miracles recorded in it. In the language of the law, it is an act by which he homologates the record, and superinduces his own testimony to that of the original writers. It would be vain to attempt speaking of all these testimonies. It cost the assiduous Lardner many years to collect them. They are exhibited in his credibility of the New Testament; and in the multitude of them, we see a power and a variety of evidence for the Christian miracles, which is quite unequalled in the whole compass of ancient history.

There are five apostolic fathers, and a series of Christian writers who follow after them in rapid succession. To give an idea to those who are not conversant in the study of ecclesiastical antiquities, how well sustained the chain is from the first age of Christianity, we shall give a passage from a letter of Irenæus, preserved by Eusebius. We have no less than nine compositions from different authors, which fill up the interval between him and Polycarp; and yet this is the way in which he speaks, in his old age, of the venerable Polycarp, in a letter to Florinus. "I saw you, when I was very young, in the Lower Asia with Polycarp, for I better remember the affairs of that time than those which have lately happened; the things which we learned in our childhood growing up in the soul, and uniting themselves to it. Inasmuch, that I can tell where the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out, and coming in, and the manner of his life, and the form of his person, and his discourse to the people; and how he related his conversation with John, and others who had seen the Lord; and how he related their sayings, and what he had heard concerning the Lord, both concerning his miracles and his doctrines, as he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life: all which Polycarp related agreeably to the Scriptures. These things I then, through the mercy of God towards me, diligently heard and attended to, recording them not on paper but on my heart."

Now is the time to exhibit to full advantage the argument which

the different epistles of the New Testament afford. They are, in fact, so many distinct and additional testimonies. If the testimonies drawn from the writings of the Christian fathers are calculated to make any impression, then the testimonies of these epistles, where there is no delusion, and no prejudice in the mind of the inquirer, must make a greater impression. They are more ancient, and were held to be of greater authority by competent judges. They were held sufficient by the men of those days, who were nearer to the sources of evidence; and they ought, therefore, to be held sufficient by us. The early persecuted Christians had too great an interest in the grounds of their faith, to make a light and superficial examination.

For the truth of the Gospel history, we can appeal to one strong and unbroken series of testimonies from the days of the apostles. But the great strength of the evidence lies in that effulgence of testimony, which enlightens this history at its commencement—in the number of its original witnesses—in the distinct and independent records which they left behind them, and in the undoubted faith they bore among the numerons societies which they instituted."*

The following testimonies will tend to illustrate what has been alleged in favor of the authenticity and authority of the Scriptures, from the Christian fathers and ecclesiastical writers.

Eusebius, the historian, relates that Quadratus and others, who were immediate successors to the apostles, "travelling abroad, performed the work of evangelists, being desirous to preach Christ, and deliver the Scripture of the Divine Gospels."

Justin, in the year 140, informs us that "the memoirs of the apostles (which he calls Gospels) are read according as the time allows (in the Christian churches) and when the reader has ended, the president makes a discourse, exhorting to the imitation of so excellent things." At another place, he confirms his sentiments by saying "as they have taught, who have written the history of all things concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ; and we believe them."

Irenæus, about the year 170, and consequently about a century after the publication of the Gospels, says "we have not received the knowledge of the way of salvation by any others, than by those who have brought us the Gospel, which they first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, committed to writing, that it might be, for time to come, the pillar and foundation of our faith. For after our Lord rose from the dead, and they were endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. Then they went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessings of heavenly peace, having all of them, and each one alike, the Gospel of God. Then Matthew, among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language, while Pe-

* Chalmer's Evidences of Christianity, Chap. v.

ter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome, and founding a church there. After their exit, Mark also, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us, in writing, the things which had been preached by Peter. Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the Gospel preached by him; afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned on his breast, likewise published a Gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus, in Asia."

Tertullian, about the year 200, bears the following concise and appropriate testimony: "Among the apostles, John and Matthew teach us the faith; among apostolic men, Luke and Mark refresh it. I say then that not with them only which are apostolical, but with all who have fellowship with them in the same faith, is that Gospel of Luke received from its first publication, which we zealously maintain. The same authority of the apostolical churches, will support the other Gospels which we have of them, I mean John's and Matthew's, although that likewise which Mark published may be said to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was."

In the beginning of the third century, lived the great and justly celebrated Origen, whose quotations of scripture are so numerous as to have induced that eminent critic, Dr. Mill, to say, that if we had all his works, we should have before us almost the whole text of the Bible; he informs us, that in his time, "the four Gospels were received without dispute, by the whole church of God under Heaven." Again, he adds, that "Luke once more sounded the trumpet, in relating the Acts of the Apostles." Eusebius records of him, that when he went into Palestine, about the year 216, though he had not been ordained a presbyter, he was desired by the bishops of that country to discourse and expound the scriptures, publicly, in the churches. Nothing more need be added; for from the days of Origen, the New Testament stood complete, and was as much esteemed, venerated, cited, and appealed to, as a divine guide, as it ever was, or can be, even at the present time.

In the fourth century we find the Arians refusing to admit the words consubstantial and essence, "*because they were not in the scriptures.*" One of them in contest with Augustine says, "If you say what is reasonable, I submit; if you allege any thing out of the divine scriptures, which are common to both, I must hear; but unscriptural expressions deserve no regard."*

It may help to convey to us some notion of the extent of Christianity, or rather of the character and quality of many early Christians, to notice the number of Christian writers who flourished in these ages. St. Jerome's catalogue contains sixty-six writers within the three first centuries, and the six first years of the fourth; and fifty-four between that time and his own, viz. A. D. 392. Jerome introduces his catalogue with the following just re-

* For all these and many similar quotations, see Lardner's Credibility and Paley's Evedences.

monstrance:—"Let those, who say the church has had no philosophers, nor eloquent and learned men, observe who and what they were, who founded, established and adorned it; let them cease to accuse our faith of rusticity, and confess their mistake." Of these writers, several, as Justin, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Bardesanes, Hippolitus, Eusebius, were voluminous writers. Christian writers abounded particularly about the year 178. Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, founded a library in that city A. D. 212. Pamphilus, the friend of Origen, founded a library at Cesarea, A. D. 294. Public defences were also set forth, by various advocates of the religion, in the course of its three first centuries. Within one hundred years after Christ's ascension. Quadratus and Aristides, whose works, except some few fragments of the first, are lost; and about twenty years afterwards, Justin Martyr, whose works remain, presented apologies for the Christian religion to the Roman emperors: Quadratus and Aristides to Adrian, Justin to Antonius Pius, and a second to Marcus Antonius. Melito, bishop of Sardis, and Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, and Miltiades, men of great reputation, did the same to Marcus Antonius twenty years afterwards: and ten years after this, Apollonius, who suffered martyrdom under the emperor Commodus, composed an apology for his faith, which he read in the senate, and which was afterwards published. Fourteen years after the apology of Apollonius, Tertullian addressed the work, which now remains under that name, to the governors of provinces in the Roman empire; and about the same time, Minucius Felix composed a defence of the Christian religion, which is still extant; and, shortly after the conclusion of this century, copious defences of Christianity were published by Arnobius and Lactantius.*

On this article, I have been more prolix than I intended, but I have had a peculiar reason for being so explicit. Some are too illiberal to admit, that a preacher of the *Common Salvation* can be a believer in the Sacred Scriptures: but this is their own blinded imagination, to which a contracted mind naturally tends. To the blessed name and religion of Jesus, I feel a sacred and growing devotion. In this system of unchangeable truth, my mind was imbued at an early age. I have tried and found Jesus to be a faithful and true Witness. He gave himself for me, and my days are his due.

*Paley's Evidences, vol. 2. Chap. 9. S. 1.

INTEGRITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Under this head, I include both the entireness and the purity of the Christian scriptures. It will be therefore appropriate and suitable here to inquire into the nature and authority of the canon, and also concerning the state of the received text.

The word *canon* signifies a law or rule, and is used to denote that arbitrary decision of the ancient church which distinguishes certain books of Sacred Writ, as a rule of faith and practice. Hence those books of the New Testament which received the sanction of the eminent Fathers and councils of the fourth century, are called *canonical*, and the rest are denominated *apocryphal*, or condemned. Of the authority and correctness of this decision, however, every man has equal right to judge, as well as concerning the creeds which were formed in the same age; for all must admit that if these fathers and councils were liable to err in the one case, they were equally subject to fallibility in the other. The canon of the New Testament is therefore to be considered as *received*, or *true*. The received includes all the books in the present volume, called the New Testament. The true canon contains all books, the genuineness of which can be established by satisfactory evidence. "The opinions, or rather the conjectures of the learned, about the time when the books of the New Testament were collected into one volume, as well as those about the authors of that collection, are extremely different. It is, however, sufficient for us to know, that the greatest part of the books of the New Testament were, before the middle of the second century, read in every Christian society throughout the world, and received as a divine rule of faith and manners."* The formation of the canon seems to have been the result of free and individual inquiry. Eusebius expressly affirms† that the four Gospels were collected during the life of John, and that the three first obtained his approbation. Papias, a cotemporary of Polycarp, and who had been a hearer of John, minutely describes the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.‡ Tatian, in A. D. 172, composed a Gospel, or Harmony, out of the four, called *Diatesseron:* and in 178, Irenæus labours, at some length, to prove that there were no more than four gospels of divine authority. A very few years after, we find Clement, of Alexandria, use these discriminating words: "We have not this passage in the *four Gospels delivered to us*, but in that according to the Egyptians."‖ These testimonies sufficiently show the early preference which the four Gospels obtained among the Christians. Moreover, as the Syriac version must have been made in the second century at latest, and as it contains the four Gospels

* Mosheim, vol. 1, 193. † Eccles. Hist. L. 3, C. 24. ‡ Lardner's Credib. vol. 1, 239. ‖ Lardner's Cred. vol. 2, 469.

the Acts, the thirteen Epistles ascribed to Paul, the first of John, and the first of Peter, it shows the canon to be generally fixed at that early period. The catalogues of Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Cyril, the Councils of Laodicea and Carthage, Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome and Augustine, contain all the books in the Syriac version: but of the rest they differ in opinion.

The following rules for settling the canon of Scripture, are selected from the learned Jeremiah Jones' "new method."

1. Those books are canonical, which were read for Scripture in the churches of the primitive Christians; and cited as Scripture by the early Christian writers.

2. Those books are canonical which are found in the most ancient catalogues of Christian books, and which have been incorporated in the ancient Syriac version.

3. Those books are considered canonical which have been supported by the testimony or traditions of those who lived nearest the time in which the books profess to have been written.

Being guided by these rules, we may; with becoming confidence, retain the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul, the first of John, and the first of Peter, in the canon of the New Testament. But when we so say, we do not imply that these books are free from interpolations, or that those parts which are not authentic, should be considered of equal authority with those that are clearly genuine.

"But not long after Christ's ascension, several histories of his life and doctrines, full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders, were composed by persons whose intentions, perhaps, were not bad, but whose writings discovered the greatest superstition and ignorance. Spurious productions were imposed on the world by fraudulent men, as the writings of the holy apostles, and these spurious writings were calculated to produce the greatest confusion, had there not been the greatest care used in separating the genuine and apostolical from the spurious trash circulated under the name of Divine Scripture."

Whether the canon of the Christian Scriptures be *complete*, has afforded ample ground for dubious discussion among the learned. The *negative* has been maintained by men of the very first standing in the field of Christian literature; among whom, probably, none have been more strenuous than Archbishop Wake and Professor Whiston.*

The three first centuries after Christ, present us a list of more than *one hundred books*, all professing claims to authority as Christian Scriptures, and most of them assuming the names of Christ and his Apostles, and their immediate successors, as authors; and the most stupid and foolish frequently boasting the greatest share of inspiration and celestial authority. In these circumstances,

*See Wake's edition of the Apostolic Fathers, and Whiston's Primitive Christianity.

what could the early Christians do? Those books would naturally be preferred, whose authenticity could be most clearly ascertained, or whose sentiments were most accordant to the views of sectarian devotees: and as the age in which the canon became settled was the most prolific in sectarian violence, fraudulent dealings, heresies, outrage and bloodshed among pretended Christians, it was the very worst season in the whole Christian history for a calm, deliberate, and judicious selection of books. Some books would naturally obtain patronage in one section of country, which would be unknown or despised in another—one sect of Christians would prefer a certain class of books and another sect would make a selection more or less different, according to the different views of the parties and their local habitation.

There are three questions of great importance which naturally intrude on the mind of a serious inquirer, concerning the authority of the received canon of Scripture: 1. Are there *any other books* of equal authority with those included in the present canon of the New Testament? 2. Are all the books included in the present canon, of equal authority? 3. Have these sacred books been transmitted to us in primitive purity?

1. The number of books which have, at different ages, claimed admission into the canon. has been very considerable. Mr. Toland* has presented a catalogue containing the names of above eighty books, professing to have been written by Christ himself, his apostles, or their immediate successors. All these he would persuade us to receive as books of equal authority with those contained in the received canon: and this he labors to prove, by alleging that they, or at least many of them, were cited by the first Christians, as books of Scripture. The learned Dr. S Clark, in his reflections on Toland's Amyntor, concedes the promiscuous citation of many other books not contained in our catalogue: and the still more learned Casaubon, in his controversy with Baronius, asserts that "every body knows that Justin Martyr, Clemens, Alexandrinus, Tertullian. and other primitive writers, both cite and approve books which every body now considers apocryphal." The very learned Dodwell† affirms that till the time of Trajan, or even that of Adrian, no canon of the New Testament was fixed—but that the supposititious pieces of heretics were received by the faithful, the apostolical writings being bound up with theirs, and indifferently used in the churches: Spanheim‡ observes that "Clemens, Alexandrinus, and Origen, very often cite apocbryphal books, under the express name of Scripture." Indeed, a higher authority than any that has been yet cited, speaks of many who had taken in hand to write Gospels, yet attaches no blame to them, but rather assigns the fact as a reason of his own undertaking.‖ Tertullian, Origen and others, who knew the great number of forge-

*Amyntor, p. 20. †Notes on Ireneus. ‡Hist. Christ. Secul. 3, p. 706. ‖Luke, 1, 1.

ries in the Apostles' names, explain 2 Thes. 2. 2, of books that were falsely ascribed to Paul; and their comments seem to be confirmed by the close of the Epistle, where Paul makes his own signature the future *test* of his genuine writings.* He also alludes to spurious Gospels, in the beginning of his Epistle to the Galatians.

Archbishop Wake† says we ought to regard the writings of the Apostolical fathers, such as Clemens, Barnabas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, as the pure uncorrupted doctrines of Christ and his Apostles. Whiston considers the Constitutions of the Apostles of greater value than the writings of a single Apostle; and earnestly contends that the Epistles of Clemens, the doctrine of the Apostles, the apostolical Constitutions, the Epistle of Barnabas, the shepherd of Hermas, the second Esdras, the Epistles of Ignatius and Polycarp, should be received into the canon of Scripture.

Several eminent writers have furnished lists of books which have been deemed apocryphal and as such a list may be thought appropriate in this place and desirable at least by the curious, I shall here subjoin the following, taken from the Reverend and learned Jeremiah Jones' "New method of settling the Canon," with the authorities from whom they are selected.

1. Andrew, Acts of, Cited by Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 25. Philastr. Heres. 86. Epiphan, Heres. 47. 1.——61. n. 1——63. n. 2. Gelas. in Decret.

2. Books in his name, Aug. Contra Advers. Leg. et Prophet. Tom. 61 l. 1. C. 20. Decret. Innocent. 1. Cap. 7.

3. Gospel of, Gelas. in Decret.

4. Appelles, Gospel in his name. Hieron. Prefat. Comment. in Matth.

5. Apostles, Gospel according to the 12, Origen Comment. in Luc. 1. Ambros. Comment. Luc. 1. Jerom. Prefat. Comment in Matth.

6. Constitutions of, still extant in Whiston's primitive Christianity, and worthy the attention of the scholar and student.

7. Creed of, Ibid. Ambrose asserts that the twelve Apostles assembled together and formed this creed, but Archbishop Wake observes that without entering into a controversy which has been so fully handed by Natalus, Du Pin, Usher, Gerard, Vossius, Suicer, Spanheim, Tentzel, and Basnage, it is not likely any such thing had been done by the Apostles, seeing Luke has passed it in silence; and the diversity of Creeds in the ancient Church, sufficiently show that it was not composed by the Apostles, much less in its present form. Before the year 600 it read thus:

1. I believe in God the Father Almighty;
2. And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son. our Lord,
3. Who was born of the Holy Ghost and Virgin Mary,
4. And was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was buried;

*See Grotius, in loco. †See his translation of the Apostolical Fathers, preface C. 10, Sect. 11.

5. And the third day rose again from the dead;
6. Ascended into heaven, sitteth on the right hand of the Father;
7. Whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead;
8. And in the Holy Ghost;
9. The holy Church;
10. The remission of sins;
11. And the resurrection of the flesh, Amen.

8. History of the Apostles, extant.

6. Barnabas, Gospel of, Gelas. in Decret.

10. Epistle of, Wake's Apostolical Fathers. Whiston's Primitive Christianity, and Apocryphal New Testament.

Barnabas was a companion and fellow-preacher with Paul. This Epistle lays a greater claim to canonical authority than most others. It has been cited by Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, and many ancient Fathers. Cotelerius affirms that Origen and Jerome esteemed it genuine and canonical; but Cotelerius himself did not believe it to be either one or the other; on the contrary he supposes it was written for the benefit of the Ebionites, who were tenacious of rites and ceremonies. Bishop Fell feared to own expressly what he seemed to be persuaded of, that it ought to be treated with the same respect as several of the books of the present canon. Dr. Bernard, Savilian professor at Oxford, not only believed it to be genuine, but that it was read throughout, in the churches at Alexandria, as the canonical scriptures were. Dodwell supposed it to have been published before the Epistle of Jude, and the writings of both the Johns. Vossius, Du Pin, Dr. Cave, Dr. Mill, Dr. S. Clark, Whiston, and Archbishop Wake, also esteemed it genuine: Menardus, Archbishop Laud, Spanheim, and others, deemed it apocryphal.

11. Bartholomew, writings of, Dionys. Areop. de Theol. Mystica. p. 167.

12. Gospel of, Hieron. Catalog. Vir. Illus. in Pant. et Prefat. Comment. in Matth. Gelas. in Decret.

13. Basilides, Gospel of, Origen, and Ambrose in Luc. 1. Hieron. Prefat. Comment. in Matth.

14. Cerinthus, Gospel of, Epiphan. Heres. 51.

15. Revelation of. Caius Presb. apud Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 28.

16. Corinthians, Epistle of to Paul, still extant.

17. Christ, Epistle of to Peter and Paul. Aug. de Consens. Evang. l. 1. c. 9. Tom. 4.

18. Some other books in his name. Ibid. c. 3.

19. An Epistle of, produced by the Manicheans, Aug. contra Faust. 28. c. 4.

20. Letter of, to Abgarus. Extant.

The first writer who makes any mention of the Epistles that passed between Jesus Christ and Abgarus, is Eusebius, Bishop of

* See Mr. Justice Bailey's Edition of the book of Common Prayer.

Cæsarea, in Palestine, who flourished in the early part of the fourth century. For their genuineness, he appeals to the public registers and the records of the City of Edessa, in Mesopotamia, where Abgarus reigned, and where he affirms he found them written in the Syriac language. He publihsed a Greek translation of them, in his Ecclesiastical History. The learned world has been much divided on this subject; but, notwithstanding the erudite Grabe, with Archbishop Cave, Dr. Parker, and other divines have strenuously contended for their admission into the canon of Scripture, they are deemed apocryphal. The Rev. Jeremiah Jones observes, that the common people in England have this Epistle in their houses, in many places, fixed in a frame, with the picture of Christ before it; and that they generally, with much honesty and devotion, regard it as the word of God, and the genuine Epistle of Christ.

21. Letter of, to Leopas, Priest of Eris. Still Extant.

22. Gospel of his infancy. Extant in the Apocryphal New Test ament,

Mr. Henry Sike, Professor of Oriental Languages at Cambridge, first translated and published this Gospel in 1697. It was received by the Gnostics, and other Christians, viz. Eusebius, Athanasiaus, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, &c.

M. La Crose cites a synod at Angamala, in the mountains of Malabar, A. D. 1599, which condemns this Gospel, as commonly read by the Nestorians in that country. Ahmed Ibu Idris, a Mahometan divine, says, it was used by some Christians in common with the other four Gospels; and Ocobius de Castro mentions a Gospel of Thomas, which he says, he saw and had translated to him by an Armenian Archbishop at Amsterdam, that was read in very many churches of Asia and Africa, as the only rule of their faith. Fabricius takes it to be this Gospel. It has been supposed, that Mahomet and his coadjutors used it in compiling the Koran.

23. Clemens, Epistles of, Extant. Apocryphal New Testament, Primitive Christianity.

The first of these Epistles contains fifteen chapters, and is greatly preferred to the second. It is translated by Archbishop Wake, from a very ancient Greek copy at the end of the famous Alexandrine, Manuscript. Clement was a disciple of Peter and bishop of Rome. Clemens Alexandrinus, Jerome, and Ruffinus, regard him as an apostolic man: and Eusebius says this epistle was read in the public assemblies of the primitive church; it is included in one of the ancient collections of canonical scriptures.

24. Egyptians, the Gospel according to Clem. Alexand. Strom. l. 3. Origen in Luc. 1. Hieron, in Matth. Epiph. Heres. 62. n. 2. As this book is lost, except a few extracts, we are unable to form a correct judgment of its real merits; but from the most ancient and impartial testimony we have much reason to lament its loss. Perhaps it fell a prey to that blind zeal which abhors what-

ever is not in unison with its favorite opinions. This book was held in high esteem among many of the early christians, and frequently cited as genuine scripture.

25. Ebionites, Gospel of, Epiphan. Heres. 30. n. 13. There can be no doubt but that this book was genuine.

26. Acts of the Apostles used by them. Ibid.

27. Encratites, Gospel of, Epiphan. Heres. 46. n. 1.

28. Eve, Gospel of, Ibid. Heres. 26.

29. Hebrews, Gospel according to, Hegesip. Comment apud Euseb. Hist. l. 4. c 22. Clemens Alex. Strom. l. 1. Origen Tract. 8. in Matth. et in Joan. p. 58. Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 25, 27, 29, and Jerome in many places. This, as far as we can judge, was the ancient, genuine, and authentic Gospel of Matthew, written by him, in Hebrew, a few years after our Lord's ascension, for the use of his own countrymen. It had not the spurious introduction contained in the Greek copy.

30. Helcesaites, the book of, Euseb. Hist. L. 6. C. 38.

31. Hermas, shepherd of, Apochryphal Testament.

This book is thus entitled, because it was composed by Hermas, brother to Pius, bishop of Rome; and because the angel, who bears the principal part in it, is represented in the form and habit of a Shepherd. Irenæus quotes it under the very name of Scripture; Origen thought it a most useful writing, and that it was divinely inspired; Eusebius says, that, though it was not esteemed canonical, it was read publicly in the churches, which is corroborated by Jerome; and Athanasius cites it, calls it a most useful work, and observes that though it was not strictly canonical, the Fathers appointed it to be read for direction and confirmation in faith and piety. Jerome, Notwithstanding this, and that he applauded it in his catalogue of writers, in his comments upon it afterwards, terms it apocryphal and foolish. Tertullian praised it when a Catholic, and abused it when a Montanist. Although Galasius ranks it among the apocryphal books, it is found attached to some of the most ancient MSS. of the New Testament; and Archbishop Wake, believing it to be the genuine work of an apostolical father, preserves it to the English reader, by his translation, in which he has rendered the books not only more exact, but in greater purity than they had before appeared. The Archbishop procured Dr. Grabe to entirely collate the old Latin version with an ancient MS. in the Lambeth library; and the learned prelate himself still further improved the whole from a multitude of fragments of the original Greek, never before used for that purpose.

32. Hesychius, Gospel of, Prefat. in Evang. Gelas in Decret.

33. Ignatius, Epistles of, extant in Wake's Apostolical fathers. Apocryphal New Testament.

The Epistles of Ignatius are translated by Archbishop Wake from the text of Vossius. He says that there were considerable difference in the editions; the best for a long time extant contain-

ing fabrications, and the genuine being altered and corrupted. Archbishop Usher printed old Latin translations of them at Oxford, in 1644. At Amsterdam, two years afterwards, Vossius printed six of them in their ancient and pure Greek; and the seventh, gradually amended from the ancient Latin version, was printed at Paris, by Ruinart, in 1689, in the acts and martyrdom of Ignatius, from a Greek uninterpolated copy. These are supposed to form the collection that Polycarp made of the Epistles of Ignatius, mentioned by Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Athanasius, Theodoret, Gelasius, and other ancients: but many learned men have imagined all of them to be apocryphal. This supposition, the piety of Archbishop Wake, and his persuasion of their utility to the faith of the church, will not permit him to entertain; hence he has taken great pains to render the present translation acceptable, by adding numerous readings and references to the canonical books.

34. Infancy, 2 Gospel of, See apocryphal New Testament.

The original in Greek, from which this translation is made, will be found printed by Cotelerius, in his notes on the Constitutions of the Epostles, from a MS. in the French King's Library, No. 2279. It is attributed to Thomas, and conjectured to have been originally connected with the Gospel of Mary.

35. James, book of, Origen in Math. 13.

36. Books in his name, Epiphan. Heres. 30, 22. Innocent 1. in Decret.

37. The Prot-Evangelium of, Extant in Apocryphal Testament.

This Gospel is ascribed to James. The allusions to it in the ancient Fathers are frequent, and their expressions indicate that it had obtained a very general credit throughout the Christian world. It is supposed to have been originally composed in Hebrew. Postellus brought the MS. of this Gospel from the Levant, translated it into Latin, and sent it to Oporinus, a printer at Basil, where Bibliander, a Protestant divine, and the Professor of Divinity at Zurich, caused it to be printed in 1552. Postellus asserts, that it was publicly read as Canonical in the Eastern Churches, they making no doubt that James was the author of it. It is, nevertheless considered apocryphal by some of the most learned divines in the Protestant and Catholic churches.

38. John, Acts of, Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 25. Athanas, in Synop. Philast. Heres. 87. Epiphan. Heres. 47. Aug. Contra Advers. Leg. l. 1. c. 20.

39. Books in his name, Epiph. Heres. 3, n. 32. Innocent 1 in Decret.

40. Jude, Gospel in his name, Epiph Heres. 38. n. 1.

41. Iudas Iscariot, a Gospel in his name, Iren. Advers. Heres. l. 1. c. 35.

42. Lucius, Acts of the Apostles by, Aug. de Fide. Contra

Manicheum.—See the thirty-eighth chapter of the sixth volume.

43. Lentilius, Acts of the Apostles by, Ibid. Lib. de Act. cum Felic. Manich. c. 6. eod. Tom.

44. Books of, Gelasius in Decret.

45. Leontius, Acts of the Apostles by, Aug. de Fide contra Manich. c. 5.

46. Lenthon, Acts of the Apostles by, Hieron. Epist. ad Chromat. et Heliodor.

47. Lucian Gospel of, Hieron. Prefat. in Evang. ad Damas.

48. Manichees, the acts of the Apostles used by them, August. contra Adiman. Manich. c. 17.

49. Marcion, Gospel of, Tertull. advers. Marcion. l. 4. c. 2 and 4. Epiphan. Heres. 42.

50. Mary, Gospel of the birth of, Extant in the Apocryphal New Testament.

In the primitive ages, there was a gospel of this name attributed to Matthew, and received as authentic by some of the early sects, among the Christians. It is found in the works of Jerome, from which the present translation is made. From a copy of this Gospel, Faustus, bishop of Riez, endeavors to prove that Jesus, as the Son of Mary, could not be of the family of David, *but of the tribe of Levi, for her father was a Priest of the name of Joachim.* This Gospel is cited also by Ephiphanius and Augustine. It is very similar to the Prot-evangelion of James.

51. Matthew, books in his name, Epiph. Heres. 30. n. 22.

52. Matthias, Gospel of, Origen in Luc. 1. Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 25. Ambrose in Luc. 1. Hieron. in Matth.

53. Traditions of. Clemens Alex. Strom. ll. 1. 3. 7.

54. A book in his name. Innocent. 1 in Decret.

55. Merinthus, Gospel of, Epiph. Heres. 51 n. 7.

56. Nicodemus, Gospel of, Extant in the Apocryphal Testament.

This Gospel is thus headed: "*The Gospel of Nicodemus the disciple, concerning the suffering and Resurrection of our Master Jesus Christ.*" Some of the learned have believed this book to have been written by Nicodemus, who became a disciple of Jesus Christ, but the greater number have considered it one of the pious frauds, about the close of the third century.

57. Paul, Acts of, Origen de Princip. l. 1. c. 2. and in Joan. Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 3. Philastr. Heres. 87.

58. Acts of Paul and Thecla, Tertull. de Baptism, c. 17. Hieron. Catalog. Vir. Illust. in Luc. Gelas. in Decret. Extant in Apocryphal Testament.

Tertullian says that this piece was forged by a Presbyter of Asia, who being convicted, "confessed he did it out of respect to Paul," and Pope Gelasius, in his Decree against Apocryphal books, inserted it among them. Notwithstanding this, a large part of the history was credited and looked upon as genuine among the primi-

tive Christians. Cyprian, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Austin, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, and Severus Sulpitius, who all lived within the fourth century, mention Thecla, or refer to her history. Cardinal Baronius. Locrinus, Archbishop Wake, and others, and also the learned Grabe, who edited the Septuagint, and revived the Acts of Paul and Thecla, consider them as having been written in the Apostolic age; as containing nothing superstitious, or disagreeing from the opinions and belief of those times; and, in short, as a genuine and authentic History. Again, it is said, that this is not the original book of the early Christians; but however that may be, it is published from the Greek MS. in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, which Dr. Mills copied and transmitted to Dr. Grabe.

59. Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans, Extant in the Apocryphal Testament, and in Clarke's Commentary, at the end of the epistle to the Collossians.

60. Preaching of Paul, Lactant. de Ver. Sapient. l. 4. c. 21. Clemens Alex. Strom. 6.

61. The Revelation of Paul, Epiph. Heres. 38. n. 2. August. Tract. 98 in Joan. Gelas. in Decret.

62. Third epistle of, to the Corinthians, seen by Archbishop Usher and Dr. Gregory, in an Armenian Manuscript.

63. A book in the name of, Cypr. Epist. 23.

64. Letters of, to Seneca, Extant in Apocryphal Testament. There are eight Epistles of Seneca to Paul, and six of Paul to Seneca. Several very learned writers have entertained a favorable opinion of these Epistles. They are undoubtedly of high antiquity. Salmeron cites them to prove that Seneca was one of Cæsar's household, referred to by Paul, Philip. iv. 22, as saluting the brethren at Philippi. In Jerome's enumeration of illustrious men, he places Seneca, on account of these Epistles, amongst the ecclesiastical and holy writers of the Christian church. Sixtus Senensis has published them in his Bibliotheque, p. 89, 90; and it is from thence that the present translation is made. Baronius, Bellarmine, Dr. Cave, Spanheim, and others, contend that they are not genuine.

65. Perfection, Gospel of, Epiphan. Heres. 26. n. 2.

66. Peter, Acts of, Euseb. Hist. l. 3. Athanas. in Synops. Philastr. Heres. 87. Hieron. Catalog. in Petro. Epiphan. Heres. 18. n. 16.

67. Doctrine of, Origen in prefat. de Princip.

68. Gospel of, Serap. de Evangel. Petri apud Euseb. Histor. l. 6. c. 12. Tertull. advers. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5. Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 3. Hieron. in Catalog. Vir. Illust. de Petro.

69. Judgment of, Ruffin, Exposit. in Symbol. Apostol. s. 36. Hieron. Catalog. de Vir. Illust. de Petro.

70. Preaching of, Origen in Joan. Clemens Alex. Strom. ll. 1, 2, 6. Theodoret Byzant. in excerpt. Lactant. l. 4. c. 21. Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 3. Hieron. Catalog. Vir. Illust. de Petro. It

is very probable, this book was the same as the Gospel by Mark.*

71. Revelation of, Clem. Alex. Hypotypos. apud Euseb. Hist. l. 6. c. 14. Theodoret. Byzant. Ectog. p. 806. Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 3. c. 25. Hieron. Catalog. de Vir. Illust. de Petro.

72. Philip, the Acts of, Gelasius in Decret.

73. Gospel of, Epiphan. Heres. 26. n. 13.

74. Scythianus, Gospel of, Cyrl. Catech. 6. Epiphan. Heres. 66. n. 2.

75. Selucus, the Acts of the Apostles by, Hieron. Epist. ad Chromat. et Heliod.

76. Stephen, Revelation of, Gelas. in Decret.

77. Tatian, Gospel of, Euseb. Hist. l. 4. c. 29.

78. Thaudeus, The Gospel of, Gelas. in Decret.

79. Themison, the Catholic Epistle of, Euseb. Hist. l. 5. c. 18.

80. Thomas, the Acts of, Epiphan. Heres. 47. n. 1. and 61. 1. Athanas. in Synops. Gelas. in Decret.

81. Gospel of, Origen in Luc. 1. Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 25. Cyrl. in Catech. 4 and 6. Ambros. in Luc. 1. Athan. in Synops. Hieron. Prefat. Comment. in Matth. Gelas in Decret.

82. Revelation of, Ibid.

73. Books under the name of, Innocent 1. in Decret.

84. Truth, the Gospel of, Ireneas advers. Heres. l. 3. c. 11.

85. Valentinus, the Gospel of, Tertull. de prescript. advers. Herit. c. 49.

The above Catalogue added to the number of books in the received Canon, amount to about 112, or avoiding all repetition of allusion, about 100 books; all of which have made pretensions to divine authority, however diversified their claims may have been. The number might have been augmented, had we descended to later times; but we have confined the catalogue to those books which were in circulation, within the three first centuries after Christ. Out of this list, about 68 books have perished, except a few fragments. It is altogether probable that they suffered in the auto da Fes of the Orthodox Fathers and Councils of the fourth century.

From the above catalogue of books, it will be easily perceived, that it is extremely difficult to settle the Canon of the New Testament. The Jews can assert with great assurance, that their Canon of Scripture was settled by Ezra, on the return from the Babylonian Captivity, but we can fix no period, sooner than the fourth century, when the number of the books of the New Testament became definite. To settle the Canon of the Old Testament, we have only to disprove a few obscure books, but in the New Testament, we are led to exclude a great number of books of vastly superior claims to any of the apocryphal books of the Old. Moreover the Catalogue of Jewish Scriptures was published by Melito Sardensis and others soon after the destruction of Jerusalem; and copies of the Jewish scriptures were preserved by the

* See page 167 of this work.

Christians, almost from the very foundation of Christianity: and to every objection against the Old Testament, we can reply, we admit no other books than those which were extant in the days of Christ, and approved by him and his apostles.

Bolingbroke and Hobbs would maintain, that the Canon of the New Testament was not fixed till the Council of Laodicea, A. D. 364; but that the books now called apocryphal, were miscellaneously cited with the present acknowledged Scriptures, until that late period.——Nor can this position be overthrown by any historical facts of which we are in possession. Indeed it would be premature to fix even that period, for a definite and uniform catalogue: for the famous decree of Pope Gelasius, excludes 26 books from the Canon of the New Testament, so late as the year 494, which was 130 years after the decisions of Laodicea. Hence the Apocryphal books did not wholly fall into disrepute, till a kind of uniformity of religion became established through the secular power of the Roman Clergy.

The great question "Whether any of the above list ought to have a place in the received Canon?" remains to be considered. Here modesty and sincerity demands a place which we cannot refuse them: and we are led to say we are ignorant of the real merits of many of these books; for it is beyond our power to determine: because many of the books no longer subsist, and the testimony of antiguity concerning them, seems too prejudiced and capricious to be implicitly received. But in relation to the apocryphal books, which are still extant, we unhesitatingly concur in the descisions of those who excluded them from the received Canon. We believe them unworthy the appellation of Scriptures.* Drs. Lardner and Whitby speak with great assurance on this subject. They were most certainly well acquainted with the traditions of the ancients, and men of great and extensive learning. They inform us, that these books were not much used among the early christians; that they are not once cited by any of the apostolical Fathers, by which they mean Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, whose writings include a period of near 40 years, closing with the eighth year of the second century; that Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, who succeeded the apostolical Fathers, in the second century, make no mention of any other gospels than the *four:* and though they quote largely from these gospels, never cite any passage from any other books, than those contained in the present Canon. That Clemens Alexandrinus is the first who refers to other gospels, but says there were *four* gospels received by the Church; and that there were some who would rather follow any thing than the *true Evangelical Canon.*† Origen‡ and Eusebius‖ mention that there were *other gospels*, not of the

*See Whitby's preface to the four Gospels and Lardner's works. vol. 5. p. 412. †Clem. Alex. Strom. 3. ‡Homil. 1. Procm. Luc. ‖Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 25.

Church but of the *Heretics*, which had no testimony from those ecclesiastic persons, who continued down the *genuine gospels* to them in succession; and that the doctrine contained in them was much different from the Catholic doctrine. They particularize the gospels of Thomas, Peter, Matthias, Egyptians, and the Acts of Andrew, John, and others, which they disapprove.

That a number of spurious pieces, containing foolish and ridiculous statements, should have been composed at an early period, and should have been partially received, is a thing so likely to have occurred in regard to a subject so generally interesting as Christianity, that it need excite no surprise, and cannot occasion any real discredit except to the authors of such writings. It appears from the preface to St. Luke's Gospel, that many, at that early period, had undertaken to write histories of Jesus Christ and his Apostles. The variety of pieces in circulation ultimately found their just estimation, according to the evidences which accompanied them of genuineness and credibility: and this was the only way in which the canon of the New Testament was formed. No restriction was attempted by the Apostles upon the liberty which every one had of composing writings which he might conceive calculated to edify the church; they laid claim to no monopoly of inspiration, nor did they form any list or canon of authorised books. No council of the church undertook this task during the lapse of several centuries. The volume of the New Testament was gradually collected from different quarters in which the authenticated writings of the apostles were deposited: and so carefully was the discrimination made, that, although several of the pieces contained in our present canon were disputed, owing to some slight defect of evidence, it admits of the most satisfactory proof, that no piece now excluded from it was ever generally received as sacred.

Many men of distinguished character have had discourses made for them which themselves knew nothing of, and actions imputed to them which they never performed; and eminent writers have often had works imputed to them of which they were not the authors. Nevertheless, very few impostures of this kind have prevailed in the world, all men being unwilling to be deceived, and many being on their guard, and readily exerting themselves to detect and expose such things. Many things were published in the name of Plautus which were not his. Some works were ascribed to Virgil and Horace which were not theirs. The Greek and Roman critics distinguished the genuine and spurious works of those famous writers. The primitive Christians acted in the like manner; they did not presently receive every thing proposed to them; they admitted nothing which was not well recommended. Says Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, in his examination of the Gospel of Peter, "We receive Peter and the other apostles, as Christ, but as skilful men, we reject those writings which are falsely ascribed to them."

Judging of books according to the rules suggested by Mr. Jones and others, we find no difficulty in determining the fate of most, if not all the apocryphal books now extant. These rules are as follow:

1 That book is spurious which contains histories or doctrines contrary to those which are known to be true.

2. Those books are apocryphal which contain contradictions, fabulous or silly stories, or which abound in trifling narratives.

3. Those books are apocryphal which contain things of later date than the time in which the supposed author lived; or whose style idiom, dialect, or temper is different from the known idiom, dialect, or temper of the supposed author and his country.

4. Those books are deemed apocryphal which are for the most part stolen or transcribed out of others.

5. That book is greatly to be doubted which is not found in the Syriac and Italic versions, nor in the catalogues of the eminent Fathers and Ecclesiastical writers of the third and fourth centuries.

When these rules are applied to the apocryphal New Testament, all its pretensions vanish as smoke, and the sincere intelligent Christian feels thankful to God for the wisdom manifested in the present selection.

If it be asked, why the Fathers have so frequently cited or referred to the apocryphal books? it is answered: Sometimes the Fathers make use of the apocryphal books to avoid the charge of ignorance or partiality, and sometimes, through the desire of disputing with their opponents on acknowledged principles, drawn from their own books. Such are the reasons assigned by Origen and Ambrose in their comments on Luke's preface.

In relation to the apocryphal New Testament, we would say, that no books yet exhibited to the world, under the appellation of apocryphal, can cast any reflection on those who denied them a place in the received Canon: for the writings of the apostolical Fathers are but poor compositions and most miserably interpolated, altered, and abused; and the other parts of the apocryphal Testament abound with silly and manifestly forged stories, evidently formed for purposes unworthy of a Divine revelation, and intended to teach some doctrine contrary to those which are known to be true. Such are the foolish things related in the Gospels of Mary and the Infancy about the miraculous and immaculate conception of Mary and her power of working miracles, and the Divine honors which she received. Equally absurd and trifling are the silly legends about the useless and even injurious miracles wrought by Jesus when an infant, his disputes with his school master about learning his alphabet, and his profound skill in Astronomy and Physics.

The letter of Abgarus represents that monarch as professing faith in Christ as God, and yet inviting him to the protection of

his city; as if Almighty power could not defend itself without walls or military implements. The letters of Paul and Seneca represent Paul as entreating Seneca not to venture any instructions to Nero concerning the Christian religion, and again he advises him to take convenient opportunities to insinuate the Christian religion to Nero and his family; whilst Seneca represents Nero as favorable to Christianity. The Gospel of Nicodemus introduces twelve Jews as refusing to swear because of a law that forbids swearing, and afterwards elders, scribes, priests and Levites are all brought in swearing by the life of Cesar without any scruple. Moreover who will believe the story in this book of Christ going to hell to sign Adam and the Patriarchs with the cross, *who* had all remained in hell till that time!

"Such are the compositions which attempted to gain credit, as the real productions of the Apostles and Evangelists; and so striking is the contrast between them and the genuine writings, whose style they unsuccessfully endeavoured to imitate. It deserves the most serious considerations of every one, who is unhappily prejudiced against Christianity, or (what is almost as fatal) who has hitherto not thought the subject worthy his attention, whether, if the canonical books of the New Testament had been the productions of artifice or delusion, they would not have resembled those, which are avowedly so, in some of their defects. Supposing it, for a moment, to be a matter of doubt, by whom the canonical books were written, or allowing them the credit, which is granted to all other writings having the same external authority, that of being written by the authors whose names they have always borne; upon either of these suppositions, the writers of the New Testament could not, either in situation or attainment, have had any advantages, humanly speaking, which the authors of the apocryphal books were not as likely to have possessed as themselves: consequently, if the first books had been founded upon the basis of fiction, it is surely most probable, that subsequently attempts would have equalled, if not improved upon, the first efforts of imposture. If, however, it appears, upon a candid and close investigation, that one set of compositions betrays no proofs of a design to impose upon others, and no marks that the authors were themselves deceived; while on the contrary, the others evince in every page the plainest symptoms of mistake and fraud; is it fair, is it reasonable, to ascribe to a common origin, productions so palpably and essentially different? or rather, is it not more just, and even philosophical, to respect truth in those performances, which bear the fair stamp of her features; and to abandon those, and those only to contempt, which have indubitable traces of imposture?"*

2. Are all the books admitted into the present volume of the New Testament of equal authority?

* See Maltby's Illustrations p. 65, and Horne on the Scriptures, vol. 1. appendix No. 5.

Eusebius makes an important distinction in relation to the books of the New Testament, and divides them into two classes; *acknowledged* and *disputed.* The *acknowledged* were the four Gospels, the Acts, the thirteen Epistles of Paul, and the first of John and first of Peter. The *disputed books* were Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.* Such were the views of the Primitive Christians.* But though this was the general opinion of the Christian Church, most of the books of the New Testament were rejected in their turn by different sects in the early ages and some of them in later times.

The Alogians rejected the Gospel of John, believing that it was composed by Cerinthus.† Severus and his sect rejected the Acts and all Paul's epistles.‡ The Ebionites and Helchesaites disavowed the whole of Paul's writings.‖ Marcion and his followers rejected all the New Testament, except Luke's Gospel.§ Manicheus and his followers rejected all the books of the New Testament as spurious.¶

Among the professedly orthodox, a variety of opinion prevailed concerning the books of the present Canon. Origen's catalogue omits James and Jude; the catalogues of Cyril, Gregory Nazianzen, Philastrius, and the council of Laodicea omit the Revelation; and Jerome doubts of Hebrews, whilst Philastrius rejects it, and Eusebius says the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the second of Peter were doubted even by the orthodox themselves. The catalogues, however, of Ruffin, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Augustine, and the third council of Carthage contain the same number of books as the received Canon of the New Testament.

By the rules we have given for distinguishing the *genuine* from the *spurious* books, we are led to doubt the authority of 2 *Peter*, 2 *and* 3 *John*, *Jude*, *and the Revelation*: These books were disputed in the early age of the Christian Church, as we learn from Eusebius and Dr. Lardner—and they were manifestly rejected by the first compilers of Canonical Scriptures, seeing they are excluded from the Syriac Version. We conceive they ought not to have a place in the New Testament, and therefore refuse their authority both in faith and manners. In the second Epistle ascribed to Peter, there are evident allusions to some apocryphal and, we apprehend, fabulous book, without any caution or notice; and the style becomes clearly different. In the Epistle of Jude, allusions are also made to apocryphal writings and it lacks in all the internal marks of genuineness. In respect to the Revelation, it is manifestly a book of enigmas, and no revelation at all. Moreover, Dionysius, a learned and eminent Father and critic in the early age of Christianity, says the Revelation differs essentially from the acknowledged writings of John, in sentiment, manner, and

*See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. L. 3. C. 3. 25. †August. de Heres 30. Epiphan. Heres. 51. ‡Euseb. Hist. L. 4. 29. ‖Ibid. L. 3. C. 27. §Epiphan. Heres. 42. ¶August. Contra. Faust. Manich. L. 32. C. 2.

expression; that John never names himself in the genuine writings, but this writer, whoever he may have been, names himself John, in several places of the Revelation; and that no allusion is made in the revelation to the Gospel or Catholic Epistle, nor in them to it; and that the writings of John are pure and correct, but the style of the revelation is degraded by barbarisms and solecisms. We therefore unite in the judgment of Dr. Lardner, that "*these books should not be alleged as affording sufficient proof of any doctrine.*"

Notwithstanding, that we may not appear prejudiced or partial, we will here insert the apology of Bishop Blackall for these disputed books. "There is good evidence from antiquity, that these controverted books,* were received in the earliest times by those who had the best opportunity of satisfying themselves of their authority and authenticity; viz. by the persons to whom they were sent, and by the Greek Church in general. It is no wonder that these books, being written either to Christians dispersed,† or else to private persons, living perhaps at a great distance, were not easily attested. On this account they were not at first so generally received as the other books which were either written to particular churches to which the author's hand and the persons that brought them were well known, or which were published and received in the places where they were written. But even those churches, who for some time doubted of their authority, were afterwards persuaded to receive them as authentic writings of the apostles, or other inspired men. Whilst they doubted, they had reason for doing so; but their conduct in receiving them afterwards, is proof that they had then obtained sufficient evidence of their authenticity: and their change of opinion shows the care of the first Christians in receiving books into the canon of scripture, and also that the evidence for the authenticity of these books had then become complete. The backwardness of some churches to receive these disputed books, is a corroborating evidence of the authority of all the books of the New Testament: for it is evident the first christians were not too credulous."

3. Have the words of scripture been transmitted to us, in primitive purity? This question receives a full answer from Kennecott's "State of the Hebrew Text," from the various readings of about 1200 MSS. of the Old Testament, which have been collated, and from the editions of the New Testament, by Mill, Wetstein, and Griesbach. Hence the honest and intelligent reviewer of the history and present state of the sacred Text, has abundant cause to conclude with Le Clerc,‡ "we have reason to thank God, who wills that our faith should not depend on this or that place of scrip ture, which might have been changed by the neglect or wickedness of *Theologians* and transcribers; but the great agreement of the

* Namely, the Epistle to the Hebrews, James, second Peter, second and third John, and the Revelation. †And consequently only published by giving copies to some to be communicated by opportunity to others. ‡Ars critica.

books, on all necessary subjects, removes every doubt from our minds of any general corruption."

In my "Systematical Theology," I have shown from the highest authorities, that many parts of the New Testament have been interpolated and corrupted, by designing theologians and transcribers. Amongst the different passages which have suffered most, we have noticed chiefly those relating to the person and history of Jesus. Much has been done to make the scriptures speak the language of certain theologians, in the third and fourth centuries, on these subjects. One of the most early and noted frauds of the first ages, is the history of the miraculous conception, inserted in the Christian scriptures, at the commencement of the Gospel History, as narrated by Matthew and Luke. We have no evidence that this story was placed in any MS. of the genuine Gospels, sooner than the close of the second or commencement of the third century. Tatian, who composed a harmony of the Four Gospels, in 172, makes no mention of the miraculous conception: but in the third, we find Julius Africanus attempting to reconcile the genealogies, by the supposition, that the one speaks of the natural, and the other the legal descent. This was perhaps the first effort of this kind, to call away the attention of the unwary reader from the subject: but it has supplied, since that time, many a grave Theologian with a *quietus* instead of a *remedy*, and left the inquirer with an assertion of a bad tendency, instead of an explanation.

We have elsewhere stated, that if Jesus were only the Son of Mary, there could be no propriety in giving the genealogy of Joseph; nor is there any evidence that our Lord sprang from Judah: consequently the claims of the Messiah, founded on the ancient prophecies, as well as the testimonies of his apostles are lost, and the evidence of the Christian Religion is overthrown. The probability of Mary belonging to the tribe of Levi, is rendered almost certain from the concurrent testimony of the apocryphal books. The Gospel of the birth of Mary," and the Prot-Evangelion of James, describe Mary as daughter of the Priest Joachim, and not at all of the tribe of Judah: and these Gospels seem just as well entitled to credence, as the first chapters of Matthew and Luke: and just as good authority do these books afford of the miraculous conception of Mary, as of her Son Jesus, the Christ.

If our Lord sprang not from the tribe of Judah, there is no reason to believe him the Messiah; and if not, the christian religion must fall with this first pillar, or ground of our faith. A late writer in the "Gospel Advocate," would have us believe that it was of no importance whatever, whether our Lord sprang of Joseph and Mary, or of Mary alone! but assigns no reasons for this assertion. Would he have us believe that all the prophecies relative to our Lord's descent from the house of David, were of no importance? or would he have us believe his assertion, that Mary was of the house of David, without any proof, while the voice of

antiquity is clearly against it? But this writer, feeling the defect of argument on his side of the question, betakes himself to the old beaten path of clerical assumption, and rashly affirms, there is as good reason for rejecting all the gospels, as any part of them; and that it is improper and dangerous, to disturb the common faith of Christians, on this subject. Who would suppose such language proceeded from one who had spent the latter part of his life, in an effort to overturn one of the main pillars of popular opinion? But wisdom is justified of her children; and the folly of irrational restriction, betrays the symptoms of a bad cause, or dishonesty in its maintainance.

The doctrine of the miraculous conception has always been a cause of reproach to the Christian religion. Julian and Porphyry both object to the genealogies, and point out defects: and of later times these chapters have afforded subject for contemptuous and irreverent abuse of the gospel history. Should then, an unnatural and inconsistent fabrication, remain bound in the volume of the New Testament, that affords no help to the christian cause?

The copies of Matthew's gospel used by the Corinthians had not this story, nor the Genealogy. The copy of the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, which Jerome obtained from the Christians in Palestine, had not these two chapters. Nor were they ever known to have an existence in any books, used as scripture by the Jewish Christians. The copies of Luke's Gospel used by the Marcionites, wanted the story of the miraculous conception, and began at the commencement of the third chapter, as that gospel stands in the present English Version. Moreover as Theodoret informs us, that Tatian's gospel was read in the churches in the fifth century, it is clear those spurious chapters were not acknowledged as scripture, at that late period.*

It is unnecessary to notice the mistakes of these fabulous introductions, they are too palpable to escape observation by the learned. In my lecture on the miraculous conception, I have noticed anachronisms and inconsistences sufficient to overthrow the credibility of these histories, and will therefore now only mention one or two particulars. The pretended Matthew, says there were only *fourteen* generations from David till the carrying away into Babylon, and that Jehoram begat Uzziah; both of which assertions are false: for there were *seventeen* generations during that period and Uzziah was the third generation from Jehoram, being the son of Amasiah. Moreover this writer places only 27 generations between David and Christ, and allows the long space of 40 years to each generation, but Luke counts 42 generations during the same

*See my lecture on the miraculous conception, No. 12. "Systematical Theology." Professer Bauer, of Altorf, in Germany, boldly affirms that the narrative of the miraculous conception, recorded in Matthew and Luke, is a *Philosophical Mythos*, or fable of later date! See his "Brevarium Theologiæ Biblicæ," p. 218. Leipsic, 1803. also Dr. William's "*Free Inquiry*,"

time, allowing an average of about 26 years, which comes near to truth and experience, whilst the calculation of the false Matthew, alike outrages that of Luke, and Sir Isaac Newton, whose reckonings nearly agree.

According to the pretended Matthew, Christ was born at least two years before the death of Herod, but according to the pretended Luke, he was not born till Cyrenius was governor of Syria, some ten or twelve years after Herod was dead; for Archelaus who succeeded Herod, reigned ten years before his banishment; and the taxation did not take place, according to Josephus and other historians, till after the banishment of Archelaus. Hence the two writers disagree about *twelve years* in the date of Christ's birth, but this is not so great a discrepancy, as that between their catalogues of names from David to Christ; for therein they differ, *fifteen generations*, without making any two names agree. Besides both the genealogies are of Joseph, and not of Mary, for we have no other authority for Mary being of the tribe of Judah and family of David, but a modern assertion or vague hearsay. We have re-examined the subject since the publication of our lecture on the Miraculous Conception, and find all we had said strengthened and confirmed by our late investigation.

We assent to the scriptures, as the sacred records of the doctrines, laws, precepts, &c. of that divine Revelation which God has been pleased to communicate to man; but we maintain, that no man has a right to dictate to another, what is revelation, or what books ought to be received by him and what rejected. The Internal evidence of genuineness, and the favorable testimony of antiguity, is the strength of evidence in behalf of any book's claims to authority, as scripture. On the same principles, therefore, by which we receive or reject books, professedly sacred, we receive or reject any part of said books.

The Doxology, Matth. vi. 13, is the next passage of importance, which fails in evidence of genuineness, Wetstein, Griesbach, and the most eminent critics reject the whole of this doxology, as *having no claim to be considered a part of the sacred Text.* It is omitted by most of the Greek and Latin Fathers—It is wanted in the Vatican and Cambridge MSS. One of the ancients says it is part of a liturgy, but no part of scripture. Matthew and Luke, therefore, agree more nearly, and the addition in the common copies of Matthew should be rejected. There appears to have been several efforts made by transcribers to reconcile Luke to Matthew in the different parts of this prayer, but the words of Luke, freed from interpolations, are as follow: "*Father, sanctified be thy name, Thy reign come. Give us our daily bread according to our daily necessities; and forgive us our sins; for we also forgive all who are indebted to us; and lead us not into tempation.*" Hence, the phrases "*who art in heaven,*" "*thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth,*" "*but deliver us from evil.*" are all additions of annotators and trans-

cribers, who have thereby sought to render the reading in Luke agreeable to that in Matthew. Newcombe, finding the discrepancy between Matthew and Luke so great, supposes our Lord gave this form of prayer at different times to his disciples, and thereby accounts for the difference of expression. Be the matter as it may, there appears evident marks of fraudulent dealing with the sacred Text.

The last twelve verses of Mark's gospel call our attention, in the third place, as very probably an addition made to the sacred text, by some traditionist of early age. Griesbach says this passage is wanted in the Vatican MS. and in almost all the more ancient and accurate Greek books. It is marked by a star in some copies and found as a scholion in others. According to Jerome there were few Greek copies, which he had seen that had these verses, and they were not included in the canons of Eusebius. The account was thought to be irreconcilable with the report of the other Evangelists concerning our Lord's Resurrection. This passage has proved highly embarrassing to Harmonists, and its genuineness becomes peculiarly suspecpəd for the following reasons: Mark rarely deviates from the tract pursued by his precursors, Matthew, and Luke. Indeed he seems to be almost a mere copiest, in many places, transcribing the words of the other Evangelists without variation, and at other times, adding a short phrase or comment, illustrative of his author's meaning; acting rather the part of an abridger, than of an original historian. The authority of Mark's testimony is wholly derived from Matthew and Luke, whom he follows in a most servile manner. His history however is valuable, as a neat compend of the other, and an evidence of their authority and genuineness. What seems unfavorable to the authenticity of this passage is, that here he departs from his usual authorities: but perhaps he was led to this deviation from a discrepancy in the reports of Matthew and Luke.

The fourth passage, which attracts attention, is the famous history of the adulteress, in the beginning of the eight chapter of John: the fifty-second verse of the seventh chapter, and the twelfth of the eighth, form a perfect connexion; and give no cause for supposing that any thing is wanted, to fill any hiatus, for there exists none. The passage is wanted in the Alexandrine, Vatican, and other ancient MSS. It is also wanted in the Syriac and Coptic versions, and left wholly unnoticed by Origen and Nonnus who wrote commentaries on John. The MSS. which have it, exhibit the passage in such a confused, irregular manner, as no where else occurs; and as it is not found in MSS. of the first antiquity and authority, it has no just claims to a place in the canon of scripture.*

The conclusive of John's Gospel comes next in place. The two last verses are clearly the addition of some persons, perhaps the church at Ephesus, bearing testimony to the truth of the nar-

* See Griesbach and Dr. Clarke in Loco.

rative contained in the foregoing history. Hammond, Newcombe, and Clarke believe these verses to be the attestation of the Asiatic Bishops or church at Ephesus; but Le Clerc and Grotius reject the whole chapter. Notwithstanding, if according to the opinion of Dr. Clarke, we transpose the two last verses of the twentieth chapter to the end of the twenty-first, and then allow the two last verses of the twenty-first to be the attestation of the Church, which has become improperly amalgamated with the history of John, all will be, at least seemingly, consistent; but the two last verses must, on all hands, be considered an unjustifiable addition. It is worthy of remark, that though it amounts to considerable probability of genuineness, when a reading is supported by the early MSS. and versions, yet it by no means can be urged as decisive. It will not therefore be admitted, that the history of the Miraculous Conception is a narrative of facts, merely because it has a place in early Manuscripts and versions; for here is a passage supported by the highest authority of both MSS. and versions, and is, notwithstanding, most undoubtedly spurious: and its existence in early MSS. is only an evidence of its early insertion, but not of its genuineness.

The last passage which I shall here notice, is the famous trinitarian fraud, found in 1 John v. 7. This passage is so completely disavowed by all who have any pretence to critical knowledge, that its advocates are either so ignorant or stupidly obstinate as no longer to merit attention. For a full refutation of its claims, see lecture fifth, Systematical Theology.

1. Besides the above, there are many interpolations of minor importance, which ought not to be tolerated. Some times transcribers and editors of the sacred text have added or interpolated words, to make one passage of scripture more like another, to which it had some resemblance. Thus some transcriber or commentator finding Matth. xv. 8 to resemble Is. xxix. 13, interpolated these words: '*draweth nigh to me with their mouth, and,*" with a view to make Matthew's quotation agree with the original passage: and on finding some similarity of expression or circumstance between Matthew xxvii. 35, and Ps. xxii. 29, he refers to the Old Testament, interpolating these words. "*That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, they parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.*" Now as these two passages are totally unsupported by the MSS. and versions, though they be the words of canonical scripture, no transcriber had a right to intrude them on Matthew, as part of his history, seeing they were not in the original copy.

Attempts have also been made by transcribers, to make the Evangelists correspond one with another. Hence much labor was bestowed by interpolators, on the Lord's prayer given by Luke, to make it read according to the text of Matthew. Some transcriber finding the eleventh verse of the sixth chapter of Mark, to

be the same as the fourteenth of the tenth chapter of Matthew, and that Mark had not noticed the denunciation contained in the fifteenth verse of the same chapter, inserts at the end of the eleven verse in Mark, the following addition: "*Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.*" Now the evidence of the MSS. and Versions decisively pronounce this passage a spurious corruption of Mark's text, though it is found in Matthew. After the same manner, and no doubt for the same purpose, some transcriber inserted the words, "*Take eat,*" in 1 Cor. xi. 24, to cause Paul to cite the words of Christ verbatim as they are found in Matthew and Mark; whereas the original words of the Apostle were exactly in accordance with those of Luke xxii. 19. But as these words are wanted in the ancient versions and MSS. of this Epistle, their insertion is totally unwarranted. In John i. 27, the phrase, "*who is preferred before me,*" is interpolated, by some transcriber to make that verse agree with the 15th and 30th of the same chapter: and in Rev. i. 11, the words, "*I am Alpha and Omega,*" are interpolated from the 8th verse, and then the annotation is added, "*the first and the last;*" meaning that Alpha and Omega were the first and last letters of the alphabet, and the whole is placed in the eleventh verse, as the genuine writing of the original text. This was no doubt done with a view of uniformity on the one hand, and of strengthening the orthodox faith on the other. But the true reading of the eighth verse according to Griesbach, or if you will, according to the Alexandrine, Vatican, and many other ancient MSS. the Complutensian edition, the Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, Armenian, Slavonic, and Vulgate Versions, is, "*I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord God,*"—and the reading of the eleventh verse, on the same authority is, "*Saying, what thou seest, write in a book.*"—The two passages are very dissimilar, in the true or genuine copies; the speaker of the eighth verse is the great Jehovah, whilst the speaker of the eleventh is Jesus his messenger.

2. Another means, by which the text became corrupted, was the attempts of the transcribers to explain certain phrases, perhaps by marginal glosses, which afterwards got into the text. Thus in Matth. xxv. 13, the original text stood, "*Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour:*" but some transcriber, thinking the time not sufficiently definite, added, "*wherein the Son of man cometh;*" which is manifestly an interpolation, disavowed by the testimony of all the best MSS and versions. Again in John vi. 22, where it is said "*the people saw there was no other boat there,*" the transcriber interpolates, by way of explanation, "*but that in which the disciples were entered.*" So where Paul said Rom. viii. 1. There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus some transcriber or commentator added, "*who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.*" Also in John xi. 41, the original passage stood simply: "*then they took away the stone;*" to which

some transcriber added, "*Where the dead was laid:*" then to make out the sense, our translators inserted the words "*from the place,*" all of which are licentious triflings with the words of scripture.

3. This liberty was afterwards extended to the explanation of phrases, according to *the analogy of the faith;* that is, according to the opinion of the transcriber or commentator. One of the most harmless attempts of this kind that ever was made, occurs Luke ix. 56: "*For the son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*" Notwithstanding as these words were not supported by the proper evidences of genuineness, however agreeably to the analogy of Faith, no transcriber had a right to insert them in the text of Luke. Explanatory phrases of a worse tendency have been interpolated, in different parts of the scriptures: Thus with a view to represent Jesus the Creator of the world, some enthusiast added the words, "*by Jesus Christ*, to Ephes. iii. 9. To confirm the doctrine of vicarious sufferings and bloody sacrifices, as substitutes for virtue, a similar attempt is made Coloss. i. 14, by the insertion of the phrase, "*through his blood,*" which is totally void of all authority. Again to extend the notion of these vicarious sufferings to an infinite degree, an incarnate Deity is judged necessary, and the word, *God*, must therefore be inserted in Acts xx. 28, 1 Tim. iii. 16, and 1 John iii. 16. But as I have noticed most of those passages which have been interpolated for orthodox purposes, in my Systematical Theology, I refer to that work.

Having made these observations which I believed necessary and impartial, I shall proceed to show that we have satisfactory evidence for the integrity and uncorruptedness of the New Testament in every thing material or essential to the Christian doctrine.

1. The uncorrupted preservation of the New Testament is manifest *from its contents*; for, so early as the two first centuries of the Christian æra, we find the very same *facts*, and the very same *doctrines*, universally received by Christians, which we, of the present day, believe on the credit of the New Testament.

2. *Because a universal corruption of those writings was both impossible and impracticable, nor can the least vestige of such a corruption be found in history.* They could not be corrupted during the life of their authors; and before their death copies were dispersed among the different communities of Christians, who were scattered throughout the then known world. Within twenty years after the ascension, churches were formed in the principle cities of the Roman empire; and in all these churches the books of the New Testament, especially the four Gospels, were read as a part of their public worship, just as the writings of Moses and the Prophets were read in the Jewish synagogues.* Nor would the use of them

* Dr. Lardner has collected numerous instances in the second part of his Credibility of the Gospel History; references to which may be seen in the general index of his works, article *Scriptures.* See particularly the testimonies of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, and Augustine.

be confined to public worship; for these books were not, like the Sybilline Oracles, locked up from the perusal of the public, but were exposed to public investigation. When the books of the New Testament were first published to the world, the Christians would naturally entertain the highest esteem and reverence for writings that delivered an *authentic* and inspired history of the life and doctrines of Jesus Christ, and would be desirous of possessing such an invaluable treasure. Hence, as we learn from unquestionable authority, copies were multiplied and disseminated as rapidly as the boundaries of the church increased; and translations were made into as many languages as were spoken by professors, some of which remain to this day; so that it would very soon be rendered absolutely impossible to corrupt these books in any one important word or phrase. Now it is not to be supposed (without violating all probability,) that *all* Christians should agree in a design of changing or corrupting the original books; and if *some* only should make the attempt, the uncorrupted copies would still remain to detect them. And supposing there was some error in one translation or copy, or something changed, added, or taken away; yet there were many other copies and other translations, by the help of which the neglect or fraud might be, or would be corrected.

Further, as these books could not be corrupted during the life of their respective authors, and while a great number of witnesses was alive to attest the facts which they record; so neither could any material alteration take place after their decease, without being detected while the original manuscripts were preserved in the churches. The Christians who were instructed by the apostles or by their immediate successors, travelled into all parts of the world, carrying with them copies of their writings, from which other copies were multiplied and preserved. Now, we have an unbroken series of testimonies for the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament, which can be traced backwards, from the fourth century of the Christion æra to the very time of the Apostles: and these very testimonies are equally applicable to prove its uncorrupted preservation. Moreover harmonies of the four Gospels were anciently constructed; commentaries were written upon them, as well as upon the other books of the New Testament (many of which are still extant,) manuscripts were collated, and editions of the New Testament were put forth. These sacred records, being universally regarded as the supreme standard of truth, were received by every class of Christians with peculiar respect, as being divine compositions, and possessing an authority belonging to no other books. Whatever controversies, therefore, arose among different sects (and the church was very early rent with fierce contentions on doctrinal points,) the Scriptures of the New Testament were received and appealed to by every one of them, as being conclusive in all matters of controversy; consequently it

was morally impossible, and in itself impracticable, that any man or body of men should corrupt or falsify them, in any fundamental article, should foist into them a single expression to favour their peculiar tenets, or erase a single sentence, without being detected by thousands. "If one party was inclined either to omit what opposed their peculiar tenets, or to insert what might afford them additional support, there was always some other party both ready and willing to detect the fraud. And even if they persevered in altering their *own* manuscripts, they had not the power of altering the manusripts in the hands of their opponents. Though the corruption, therefore, might be partial, it could not become general. Nor must we forget that the books, which compose the Greek Testament, have been transcribed, beyond all comparison, more frequently than the works of any other Greek author. And it is evident that the difficulty of corrupting the Greek manuscripts must have increased with every increase in their number. Though it cannot be denied, therefore, that there is stronger temptation to alter a work, which relates to doctrines, than to alter a work, which relates to matters indifferent, the impediments to the alteration of the Greek manuscripts were still more powerful than the temptation. The Gospels, which were written in different places, and the Epistles, which were addressed to different communities, were multiplied in copies, dispersed in Palestine and Egypt, in Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. Under such circumstances a general corruption of the Greek manuscripts was a thing impossible, for it could not have been effected without a union of sentiment, which never existed, nor without a general combination, which could not have been formed, before Christianity had received a civil establishment. But if such a combination had been practicable, it could not have been carried into effect, without becoming a matter of general notoriety: and ecclesiastical historians are *silent* on such a combination. The silence of history is indeed no argument against the truth of a fact established by induction, if the fact was such that it could not be generally known. But the silence of history is important in reference to a fact, which, if it ever existed, must have been a subject of general notoriety. Whatever corruptions, therefore, may have taken place in the Greek manuscripts, those corruptions must have been confined to a few, and could not, by any possibility, have been extented to them all."* Indeed, though all the Christian doctors, who were dispersed throughout the world, should have conspired to corrupt the New Testament, yet the people would never have consented to it; and if even both teachers and people had been disposed to have committed such a fraud, most unquestionably their adversaries would not fail to have reproached them with it. The Jews and Heathens, whose only aim it was to decry and put down their religion, would never have concealed it. Celsus, Porphyry, Julian,

* Bp. Marsh's Lectures, part vi. pp. 10, 11.

and other acute enemies of the Christians, would have derived some advantage from such corruption. In a word, even though the silence of their adversaries had favoured so strange an enterprise, yet the different parties and various heresies, which soon after sprung up among Christians, were an insuperable obstacle to it. Indeed, if any material alteration had been attempted by the orthodox, it would have been detected by the heretics: and, on the other hand, if a heretic had inserted, altered, or falsified any thing, he would have been exposed by the orthodox, or by other heretics. It is well known that a division commenced in the fourth century, between the eastern and western churches, which, about the middle of the ninth century, became irreconcileable, and subsists to the present day. Now it would have been impossible to alter all the copies in the eastern empire; and if it had been possible in the east, the copies in the west would have detected the alteration. But, in fact, both the eastern and western copies agree, which could not be expected if either of them was altered or falsified. The uncorrupted preservation of the New Testament is further evident.

3. *From the agreement of all the manuscripts.* The manuscripts of the New Testament, which are extant, are far more numerous than those of any single classic author whomsoever: upwards of *three hundred and fifty* were collated by Griesbach, for his celebrated critical edition. These manuscripts, it is true, are not all entire: most of them contain only the Gospels; others, the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles; and a few contain the Apocalypse or Revelation, of John. But they were all written in very different and distant parts of the world; several of them are upwards of twelve hundred years old, and give us the books of the New Testament, in all essential points, perfectly accordant with each other, as any person may readily ascertain by examining the critical editions published by Mill, Kuster, Bengel, Wetstein, and Griesbach.* The *thirty thousand* various readings, which are said to be found in the manuscripts collated by Dr. Mill, and the *hundred and fifty thousand* which Griesbach's edition is said to contain, in no degree whatever effect the general credit and integrity of the text. In fact, the more copies are multiplied, and the more numerous the transcripts and translations from the original, the more likely is it, that the genuine text and the true original reading will be investigated and ascertained. The most correct and ancient classics now extant are those, of which we have the greatest number of manuscripts; and the most *depraved, mutilated,* and *inaccurate* editions of the old writers are those of which we have the fewest manuscripts, and perhaps only a single manuscript, extant. Such are Athenæus, Clemens Romanus,

*For an account of the principal manuscripts of the New Testament, see Horne on the Scriptures, Vol. ii. Part i. Chap. ii. Sect. ii, § 4. and of the critical editions mentioned in Part i. Chap. iii. Sect. ii.

Hesychius, and Photius. But of this formidable mass of various readings, which have been collected by the diligence of collators, not one tenth—nay, not one hundredth part, either makes or can make any perceptible, or at least any material alteration in the sense in any modern version. They consist almost wholly of palpable errors in transcription, grammatical and verbal differences, such as the insertion or omission of an article, the substitution of a word for its equivalent, and the transposition of a word or two in a sentence. *The very worst manuscript extant would not pervert one article of our faith, or destroy one moral precept.* All the *omissions* of the ancient manuscripts put together could not countenance the omission of one essential doctrine of the Gospel, relating either to faith or morals; and all the *additions* countenanced by the whole mass of manuscripts already collated, do not introduce a single point essential either to faith or manners beyond what may be found in the Complutensian or Elzevir editions. And, though for the beauty, emphasis, and critical perfection of the *letter* of the New Testament, a new edition, formed on Griesbach's plan, is desirable; yet from such an one infidelity can expect no help, false doctrine no support, and even true religion no accession to its excellence—as indeed it needs none. The general uniformity, therefore, of the manuscripts of the New Testament, which are dispersed through all the countries in the known world, and in so great a variety of languages, is truly astonishing, and demonstrates both the veneration in which the Scriptures have uniformly been held, and the singular care which was taken in transcribing them; and so far are the various readings contained in these manuscripts from being hostile to the uncorrupted preservation of the books of the New Testament (as some sceptics have boldly affirmed, and some timid Christians have apprehended,) that they afford us, on the contrary, an additional and most convincing proof that they exist at present, in all essential points, precisely the same as they were when they left the hands of their authors."

Dr. Bentley well observes,* "If there had been only one manuscript of the Greek Testament at the restoration of learning, then we would have had no various readings at all. Had this been the case, would the text have been in a better condition than it now is in Mill's edition, where we have 30,000 various readings? So far otherwise, that the best copy extant would have contained hundreds of faults and omissions irreparable. Besides the suspicions of fraud and foul play would have been increased immensly. It is good, therefore to have more authors than one; and a second manuscript joined to the first gives more authority and security.

Now chuse that *second* manuscript where you *will*, there shall be a thousand variations from the *first*: and yet half or more of the

* Discourse on Free Thinking, by Philoleutherus Lipsiensis.

faults will remain in them both. A third, therefore, or a fourth and so on is still desirable, that by a mutual help, all the faults may be mended; and as some copies preserve the true reading in one place, and some in another, the more copies you call to assistance, the more do the various readings multiply: every copy having its peculiar slips, though in a principal passage or two, it may be of no particular service. This is a fact not only in relation to the New Testament, but also in all ancient books whatever. It is therefore a good providence and a great blessing that so many MSS. of the New Testament are still among us: some procured from Egypt, some from Asia, others found in the western Churches; for the very distance of places as well as the number of books, demonstrate, that there could be no collusion, nor altering, nor interpolating one copy by another, nor all by any one of them.

In profane authors (as they are called) where only one MS. had the good luck to be preserved, as Vellius Paterculus among the Latins, and Hesychius among the Greeks, the faults of the Scribes are found so numerous and the defects beyond all redress, that notwithstanding the pains of the most learned and accute critics for two whole centuries, these books are still, and are likely to continue, a mere heap of errors. On the contrary, where the copies of any author are numerous, though the various readings always increase in proportion, there the text, by an accurate collation of them, made by skillful and judicious hands, is ever the more correct, and comes the nearer to the words of the original author.

Terence is now in one of the best conditions of any of the classic writers. The oldest and best copy of Terence is now in the Vatican Library, and comes nearest to the poet's own hand: but even that has hundreds of errors, most of which may be mended out of other examplars that are otherwise more recent and of inferior value. I, myself, have collated several, and do affirm, that I have seen *twenty thousands various lections* in that little author not near so large as the New Testament: and I am morally sure, that if half the number of MSS. were collated for Terence, with that niceness and minuteness which has been used in collating the New Testament, the number of the various readings would have amounted to above 50,000!

In the MSS of the New Testament, the variations have been noted with a religious, not to say a superstitious exactness. Every difference of spelling, in the order and collation of words, has been studiously registered. Nor has the text only been ransacked, but all the ancient versions; the Latin Vulgate, Italic, Æthiopic, Arabic, Coptic, Armenian, Gothic, and Saxon; nor these only, but all the dispersed citations of the Greek and Latin Fathers, in a course of 500 years. What wonder then, if with all this scrupulous search, the varieties rise to 30,000, when in all ancient books of the same bulk of which the MSS. are numerous, the variations are as numerous or even more so: though there be no versions to swell the reckoning.

The Editors of the Profane Authors do not trouble their readers, or risk their own reputation by any useless list of small slips, committed by a lazy or ignorant scribe. What is thought commendable in an edition of scripture, and has the name of fairness and fidelity, would in them be deemed impertinence and trifling. Hence the reader not versed in ancient MSS. is deceived into an opinion that there were no more variations than the editor has noted: whereas if the same scrupulousness were observed in registering the smallest changes in profane authors as is required in sacred, the present formidable number of *thirty thousand various readings*, furnished by Dr. Mill, would appear a very trifle!

Books in verse are not near so obnoxious to variations as prose; the transcriber, if he is not wholly ignorant and stupid, being guided by the measures, and prevented from such alteration as do not consist with the laws of verse: and yet in the Poets, the variations are so numerous as can hardly be conceived without use and experience. In the edition of Tibullus by the learned Broukhuise, there is a register of the various lections at the end of the book, where may be seen, at first view, that the number of readings equal the number of lines in that book. The same is visible in Plautus, edited by Paraeus. I, myself, during my travels, have had the opportunity of examining several MSS. of the Poet, Manilius, and can affirm that the variations, I have met with, are twice as many as all the lines of that book. Add to this that the number of MSS. were few in comparison, and then imagine what the number of lections would amount to, if ten times as many were accurately examined. Notwithstanding in these and all other books, the text is not made more precarious, on that account, but more certain and authentic.

It should be considered that if a corrupt line or dubious reading chances to intervene, it does not darken the whole context, nor make an author's opinion or purpose precarious. Terence, for instance, has as many variations as any book, in proportion to its bulk. and yet with all its interpolations, omissions, additions and glosses, chuse the worst of them on purpose, and you cannot deface the contrivance and plot of one play, no not of a single scene. Its sense, design, and subserviency to the last issue and conclusion, will be visible through all the mist of the various reading. So it is with the sacred Text. Make your 30,000 readings as many more, if the number of copies can ever reach that sum; all the better for a knowing and serious reader, who is thereby more richly furnished, in order to select what he perceives is genuine. But suppose the worst, put them into the hands of a knave or fool, and yet with the most sinistrous and absurd choice, he shall not extinguish the light of one chapter, nor disguise christianity, but that every feature of it will be the same."

4. The last testimony, to be adduced for the integrity and incorruptness of the New Testament, is furnished by the *agreement* of

the ancient versions and quotations from it, which are made in the writings of the Christians of the first three centuries, and in those of the succeeding fathers of the Church.

The testimony of versions, and the evidence of the ecclesiastical fathers, have already been noticed as a poof of the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament. The quotations from the New Testament in the writings of the fathers are so numerous, that (as it has been frequently observed) the whole body of the Gospels and Epistles might be compiled from the various passages dispersed in their commentaries and other writings. And though these citations were, in many instances, made from memory, yet, being always made with due attention to the sense and meaning, and most commonly with regard to the words as well as to the order of the words, they correspond with the original records from which they were extracted:—an irrefragable argument this, of the purity and integrity with which the New Testament has been preserved. The idle objection, therefore, to the uncorruptness of the New Testament, which some opposers of divine relation have endeavoured to raise, on an alleged alteration of the Gospels in the fourth century by order of the Emperor Anastasius, falls completely to the ground for want of proof. Nor do we hazard too much in saying, that if all the ancient writings now extant in Europe were collected together, the bulk of them would by no means be comparable to that of the quotations taken from the New Testament alone; so that a man might with more semblance of reason, dispute whether the writings ascribed to Homer, Demosthenes, Virgil, or Cæsar, are in the main such as they left them, than he could question whether those of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, and Paul, are, really their productions.

The remarks of Dr. Bentley, were occasioned by the illegal use made of Dr. Mill's various readings by Mr. Collins. Dr. Whitby, terrified at the report of 30,000 various readings, imagined the only way to save Christianity, was to deny the report, and if possible, to disprove and vilify the elaborate and enlightened criticism of the indefatibable Mill: but far otherwise, the illustrious and accurate Bentley. His experience, as a classical critic, enabled him duly to estimate the invaluable treasure of sacred criticism, accumulated to a prodigious extent by Mill, and rather than disparage a work to which, probably, even his own great mind could have never attained, he applauded the labors of Mill and hoped to see them vigorously prosecuted by some worthy successor. Wetstein and Griesbach have arisen as the brightest Satellites of the Christian Luminary, and obtained an everlasting memory, among all who have learning enough to perceive their merits and honesty sufficient to confess their obligation. They have prosecuted the criticism of the New Testament till Mill's 30,000 various readings have accummulated to the immense number of 150,000!!

When some men assert that the text of Griesbach is by no means

more perfect than the vulgar copy of the Elzevirs; and that no essential doctrine of scripture was, in the least, obscured by the errors of the former editions, we can easily perceive to what sect of Christians such commentators belong. No man can deny, but that the doctrine of the Divine Unity stands in glorious majesty in Griesbach, while the light of revelation, on this all important subject, sinks to twilight in the Received Text from which the present *translations* have been made.—Sweep away, therefore, from the ramparts of Christianity, every refuge of lies! Let its authentic documents be produced, free from fraud and corruption; they will manifest themselves all lovely and divine, worthy the wisdom and goodness of God to bestow, and of the highest attainment of human intellect to admire, love and revere.

None should be surprised to find that corruptions have entered the sacred text, for attempts were made to introduce pious frauds, even in the apostolic age. But let all honest, and enlightened Christians, especially Ministers and Commentators of the sacred oracles, adopt the language and feel the Spirit of the Great Apostle of the Gentiles, the chief propagator, and the most powerful defender of the Christian cause: "*We are not as many who corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, in the sight of God, we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience, in the sight of God.*"

INSPIRATION OF THE SACRED WRITERS.

Inspiration may be defined, the communication of divine knowledge to the mind, which could not have been attained by the exercise of its faculties in a natural way. Theologians speak of Inspiration in fourfold degree.

1. *Inspiration of elevation*, where the faculties seemingly act in a regular manner, but are raised to an extraordinary degree, so that the composition shall be more excellent, sublime, and pathetic than natural genius could attain. It must be allowed that in several passages of Scripture, there is found such elevation of thought and of style, as clearly shows the powers of the writers were raised above their ordinary pitch. If a person of moderate talents should give as elevated a description of the majesty and attributes of God, or reason as profoundly on the doctrines of religion, as a man of the most exalted genius and extensive learning, we could not fail to be convinced that he was supernaturally assisted; and the conviction would be still stronger, if his composition should far transcend the highest efforts of the human mind. Some of the sacred writers were taken from the lowest rank of life; and yet sentiments so dignified, and representations of divine things so grand and majestic occur in their writings, that the noblest flights of human genius, when compared with them, appear cold and insipid.

2. *Inspiration of superintendency*, in which the Divine Being so influences the mind as to preserve it more secure from error in a complex discourse than it could have been by the use of its natural faculties. There are many things in the scriptures, which the writers might have known, and probably did know, by ordinary means. As persons possessed of memory, judgment, and other intellectual faculties which are common to men, they were able to relate certain events in which they had been personally concerned, and to make such occasional reflections as were suggested by particular subjects and occurrences. In these cases no supernatural influence was necessary to invigorate their minds; it was only necessary that they should be preserved from error. It is with respect to such passages of Scripture alone, as did not exceed the natural ability of the writers to compose, that I would admit the notion of *superintendence*. The passages written in consequence of the direction and under the care of the Divine Spirit, may be said, in an inferior sense, to be inspired; whereas if the men had written them at the suggestion of their own spirit, they would not have possessed any more authority, though they had been free from error, than those parts of profane writings which are agreeable to truth.

There are parts of the Scriptures in which the faculties of the writers were supernaturally invigorated and elevated. It is impossible for us, and perhaps it was not possible for the inspired

person himself, to determine where nature ended and inspiration began. It is enough to know, that there are many parts of the Srripture in which, though the unassisted mind might have proceeded some steps, a divine impulse was necessary to enable it to advance. I think, for example, that the evangelists could not have written the history of Christ if they had not enjoyed miraculous aid. Two of them, Matthew and John, accompanied our Saviour during the space of about two years At the close of this period, or rather several years after it, when they wrote their Gospels, we may be certain that they had forgotten many of his discourses and miracles; that they recollected others indistinctly; and that they would have been in danger of producing an inaccurate and unfair account, by confounding one thing with another. Besides, from so large a mass of particulars, men of uncultivated minds, who were not in the habit of distinguishing and classifying, could not have made a proper selection; nor would persons unskilled in the art of composition have been able to express themselves in such terms as should ensure a faithful representation of doctrines and facts, and with such dignity as the nature of the subject required. A divine influence, therefore, must have been exerted on their minds, by which their memories and judgments were strengthened, and they were enabled to relate the doctrines and miracles of their Master in a manner the best fitted to impress the readers of their histories. The promise of the Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance all things whatsoever Christ had said to them, proves, that in writing their histories, their mental powers were endowed, by his agency, with more than usual vigour.

3. *Plenary superintendency*, which excludes every mixture of error from the work. This degree of inspiration, so strenuously maintained in former ages, is not, at present, urged by almost any calm Divine of accurate Judgment or extensive learning.

4. *Inspiration of suggestion*, by which God speaks directly to the mind, and dictates the very words in which the discoveries arecommunicated, the faculties being entirely superceded. "It is manifest, with respect to many passages of Scripture, that the subjects of which they treat must have been directly revealed to the writers. They could not have been known by any natural means, nor was the knowledge of them attainable by a simple elevation of the faculties. With the faculties of an angel we could not discover the purposes of the divine mind. This degree of inspiration we attribute to those who were empowered to reveal heavenly mysteries, 'which eye had not seen, and ear had not heard,' to those who were sent with particular messages from God to his people, and to those who were employed to predict future events. The plan of redemption being an effect of the sovereign counsels of heaven, it could not have been known but by a communication from the Father of Lights."

This kind of inspiration has been called the inspiration of suggestion. It is needless to dispute about a word; but suggestion seeming to express an operation on the mind, by which ideas are excited in it, is of too limited signification to denote the various modes in which the prophets and apostles were made acquainted with supernatural truths. God revealed himself to them not only by suggestion but by dreams, visions, voices, and the ministry of angels. This degree of inspiration, in strict propriety of speech, should be called *revelation;* a word preferable to suggestion, because it is expressive of all the ways in which God communicated new ideas to the minds of his servants. It is a word, too, chosen by the Holy Spirit himself, to signify the discovery of truths formerly unknown to the apostles. The last book of the New Testament, which is a collection of prophecies, is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul says that he received the Gospel by *revelation;* that 'by *revelation* the mystery was made known to him, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it was then *revealed* unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit,' and in another place having observed that 'eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man the things which God had prepared for them that love him,' he adds, "But God hath *revealed* them unto us by his Spirit,"*

The *manner* in which divine inspiration was afforded to the sacred writers is not to be minutely described. God is sovereign in all his ways: and as he spake at *sundry times*, so has he communicated information in *divers manners*: yet may we be enabled to conceive of the mode of communication, by reflecting on what is said by the inspired writers themselves on this subject.

1. Sometimes it is said, *the word of the Lord came to the prophets;* and as we convey our thoughts to the minds of others, by certain impressions made on their brains by means of articulate sounds, God may reveal his will to any persons by making such impressions on their brains as will excite particular ideas: and as we distinguish a voice or hand-writing by use, so God may give such evidences as to assure us that it is the voice of unerring wisdom.

Some argue that every man, who hath attended to the operations of his own mind, knows that we think in words, or that, when we form a train or combination of ideas, we clothe them with words; and that the ideas which are not thus clothed, are indistinct and confused. Let a man try to think upon any subject moral or religious, without the aid of language, and he will either experience a total cessation of thought, or, as this seems impossible, at least while we are awake, he will feel himself constrained, notwithstanding his utmost endeavors, to have recourse to words as the instrument of his mental operations. As a great part of the Scriptures were suggested or revealed to the writers; as the thoughts or sentiments, which were perfectly new to them, were conveyed

*Gal. i. 12, Ephes. ii. 5, and 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

into their minds by the Spirit, it is plain that they must have been accompanied with words proper to express them; and consequently, that the words were dictated by the same influences on the mind which communicated the ideas. The ideas could not have come without the words, because without them they could not have been conceived. A notion of the form and qualities of a material object may be produced by subjecting it to our senses; but there is no conceivable method of making us acquainted with new abstract truths, or with things that do not lie within the sphere of sensation, but by conveying to the mind, in some way or other, the words significant of them.—In all those passages of Scripture, therefore, which were written by revelation, it is manifest that the words were inspired; and this is still more evident with respect to those passages which the writers themselves did not understand. No man could write an intelligible discourse on a subject which he does not understand, unless he were furnished with the words as well as the sentiment; and that the penmen of the Scriptures did not always understand what they wrote, might be safely inferred from the comparative darkness of the dispensation under which some of them lived; and is intimated by Peter, when he says that the prophets "inquired and searched diligently what, and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."†

2. Sometimes the prophet is called a *Seer*, and the communication, a *vision;* and as it is as easy to present an object to the view, as to describe it by words, so God may dart an impression or light upon the brain, which shall give us clear ideas as impressions made on the eye or ear: and as impressions made by the view are stronger than those communicated by sounds through the ear, the Jews held that the prophecy by *vision*, was more excellent than by *dream*, in which a voice is heard. Hence Prophecy was communicated by 1 *dream*, 2 *vision*, 3 *voice*, *or* 4 *suggestion.**

"When it is said, that Scripture is divinely inspired, we are not to understand that God suggested every word, or dictated every expression. From the different styles in which the books are written, and from the manner in which the same events are related and predicted by different authors, it appears that the sacred penmen were permitted to write as their several tempers, understandings, and habits of life, directed, and that the knowledge communicated to them by inspiration on the subject of their writings, was applied in the same manner as any knowledge acquired by ordinary means. Nor is it to be supposed that they were even thus inspired in every fact which they related, or in every precept which they have delivered. They were left to the common use of their faculties, and did not upon every occasion, stand in need of

*See Acts x. 11, 17, 20, and xvi. 9; 1 Cor. ii. 7, 10; 2 Cor. xii. 2; Gal. i. 11, 12. †1 Pet. i. 10, 11.

supernatural communication; but whenever, and as far as, divine assistance was necessary, it was always afforded.

That the authors of the historical books of the Old Testament were occasionally inspired, is certain, since they frequently display an acquaintance with the counsels and designs of God, and often reveal his future dispensations in the clearest predictions. But though it is evident that the sacred historians sometimes wrote under the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, it does not follow that they derived from Revelation the knowledge of those things, which might be collected from the common sources of human intelligence. Indeed, the historical books were written by persons, who were for the most part contemporary with the periods to which they relate, and had a perfect knowledge of the events recorded by them; and who in their descriptions of characters and events (of many of which they were witnesses) uniformly exhibit a strict sincerity of intention, and an unexampled impartiality. Some of these books, however, were compiled in subsequent times from the sacred annals mentioned in Scripture as written by prophets or seers, and from those public records, and other authentic documents, which though written by uninspired men, were held in high estimation, and preserved with great care by persons specially appointed as keepers of the genealogies and public archives of the Jewish nation.

These points being ascertained and allowed, it is of very little consequence, whether the knowledge of a particular fact was obtained by any of the ordinary modes of information, or whether it was communicated by immediate revelation from God; whether any particular passage was written by the natural powers of the historian, or by the positive suggestion of the Holy Spirit. Whatever uncertainty may exist concerning the direct inspiration of any historical narrative, or of any moral precept, contained in the Old Testament, we must be fully convinced that all its prophetical parts proceeded from God. This is continually affirmed by the prophets themselves, and is demonstrated by the indubitable testimony which history bears to the accurate fulfilment of many of these predictions; others are gradually receiving their accomplishment in the times in which we live, and afford the surest pledge and most positive security for the completion of those which remain to be fulfilled."

Having thus far advanced in vindication of the Inspiration of direction or superintendence. I now proceed to expose that doctrine of *Plenary Inspiration*, which teaches that *the writers of the Scriptures were under the infallible direction of the Spirit, both in expression and sentiment;* thereby representing the Evangelists as the mere *Amanuensis* of the Spirit.

1. *Plenary Inspiration, or Inspiration of suggestion was unnecessary.* The historical parts of the Old and New Testaments needed no such qualifications in their writers. All the qualifications ne-

cessary to a Historian are competent information, a sound judgment, and integrity of heart. Such Historians we believe the Evangelists to have been. Their simple, unadorned productions manifest their integrity; their familiar intercourse with their blessed Master, for the space of two or three years, supplied all needful information in relation to the subject of his and their divine message, and their own productions are sufficient proof of a sound understanding. Two of the Evangelists, at least, were eye-witnesses of the transactions which they record: What they had heard, or what they had seen, what they had handled of the word of Life, they faithfully declare to mankind. The others received the doctrines and precepts of Christianity and the report of its evidences from those whom Jesus had chosen to be with him from the beginning. Luke was in all probability one of his disciples for some time, and also one of the two with whom Christ conversed on their way to Emmaus. If their qualifications were sufficient, why should we have recourse to causes totally unnecessary to the production of the desired effect?

When our Lord commenced his public ministry, he chose twelve to be witnesses of all he did and taught: and when the disciples met to elect one to supply the place of Judas, they say "of those men who have accompanied with us all the time the Lord went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until that same day he was taken from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."* But surely it would have been unnecessary to choose one who had been a companion of the Apostles and an eye and ear-witness of Christ's ministry, if the testimony he should bear to the world were supplied to him by inspiration? Surely, says Wakefield, "we should have possessed a more unequivocal sign of inspiration, if God had appointed to record the life of Jesus, a set of men who had never known him or his Apostles, and who had enjoyed no human means of information." To have placed the Evangelists under this plenary inspiration would have been altogether *useless*, unless all transcribers and translators were continually under the same influence.

2. *The doctrine of plenary Inspiration is improbable.* Had the Evangelists been under the guidance of Divine influence, we might naturally expect sameness of style, purity of language, and perfection in the manner as well as the matter of the sacred histories; nay, we should have expected all the graces and elegancies of composition, for truly the Spirit of God is not ineloquent nor of a slow tongue.† Nothing inaccurate, nothing ungrammatical would have been found in their writings: they would have set at defiance the fastidious critic, and left no doubt of their heavenly origin. Had the Evangelists been guided by plenary inspiration, their narratives would have been perfectly consistent: but if their

* Acts i. 21, 22. †Ex. iv. 10.

narratives be compared in Newcombe's or Priestley's Harmony, every man will be qualified to judge for himself. The very fact that there are more histories than one, is evidence that the Evangelists did not consider themselves thus directed. Had they believed the Holy Spirit suggested the first history, they would not have attempted a second, much less would they have dared to vary their narratives. But far otherwise is the fact. The very circumstances that there were many histories of an imperfect cast, formed Luke's apology for undertaking a faithful record, according to the narratives of competent witnesses.—And in his history, without making the least pretension to supernatural aid, he professes to be guided by the instructions of those who had been eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.

3. *Inspiration of the above description is contrary to fact.* In the fifteenth chapter of the Acts we have the history of a synodical assembly, held at Jerusalem. The Christian converts were so far from thinking Paul and Barnabas infallible guides, that they actually sent up to Jerusalem to consult the Apostles. Now how did the assembly act on this memoriable occasion? Did they decide like men under the Inspiration of Suggestion? No they debated, they disputed, and afterwards agreed to what seemed the most prudent and reasonable. Paul at one time tells the Corintheans he had no dominion over their faith;* at another time acknowledges he spoke by permission, and not of commandment;† and on a third occasion resists Peter because he was blameable.‡ On one occasion the contention became so sharp between Paul and Barnabas, that they separated entirely.‖ The discordant accounts of the sacred writers about historical facts show that they were not restrained by a divine influence from diversity of sentiment. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all differ considerably in their account of the woman who had an issue of blood.§ Matthew and Mark say both the thieves reviled Jesus, but Luke says only one of them:¶ whilst John is entirely silent on both these subjects. In describing the Demoniac, out of whom the demons passed into the swine; Matthew says there were two demoniacs, Mark only one, Luke and John say nothing of the matter. Matthew, John, Luke and Paul, all quote Isaiah, vi. 9, 10, very differently.** Had these writers been under plenary, inspiration they would surely have quoted scripture more accurately. By comparing the accounts of Abraham's age given by Moses and Luke, we find a difference of about 60 yesrs!†† Matthew relates a story of a Roman guard being placed at the sepulchre of Jesus; but the story is unnoticed by any other historian either sacred or profane: and

* 2 Cor. i. 24. † 1 Cor. vii. 6, 25. ‡ Gal. ii. 11. ‖ Acts xv. 39. § Compare Matth. ix. 20, Mark v. 23, and Luke viii. 41, 42. ¶ See Mat. xxvii. 44, Mark xv. 32, and Luke xxiii. 39. ** Compare Mat. xiii. 14 15, John xii. 40, Acts xxviii. 26, Rom. xi. viii. †† See Acts vii. 4, and Gen. xi. 26, 32, and xii. 4.

it must therefore be very doubtful if not spurious. These things ought to lower the pretensions of some obstinate sticklers for the doctrine of plenary inspiration.

4. *Plenary Inspiration is injurious to the interests of Revelation.* It places the credibility of the Gospel history on a foundation, different from that of any other authentic history. It indeed destroys credibility by refusing the writers the character of eye and ear-witnesses. The discrepancies of the Evangelists and Apostles do not effect their credibility as honest witnesses, but on the supposition of infallible guidance, all credit is completely destroyed. It is dishonorable to the Gospel to suppose that after all the bright evidences attending its promulgation, it should still need such pretensions to support its authority. It debars investigation, divorces reason from the regions of Revelation, and leaves the Gospel to retreat like error, into the shades of darkness and mysticism.

To conclude, the Inspiration of the scriptures, consists in the communications of divine truth made by God to Moses, the Prophets, and lastly to Jesus, the Christ; and in that portion, direction, or illumination of God's Spirit, afforded to the sacred writers, enabling them to make a faithful record of all the important doctrines and moral precepts. originally communicated by God.— Hence it will appear, that no more inspiration was needed in writing the scriptures, than what was necessary to transmit to posterity, the religious instructions of the Almighty Parent of the Universe, and therefore it will follow, that the sacred writers were left to express in their own language, and according to their own views, the instructions which they had received; and consequently were, in all points, not immediately connected with that revelation, liable to err as well as other men. This we believe to be a fair and impartial conclusion, alike advantageous to Religion and Science.

Come then, O Light of lights, divine illumination, originating from the Great Cause of all being, without whom there is nothing good, nothing great, nothing wise, in the vast immensity of illimitable existences, grant unto all who labour in thy vineyard, whether as Commentators, translators, or ministers of the sacred oracles, the spirit of a sound mind, of a right understanding, and the fear of the Lord, that they, being guided into all truth, and feeling its divine influence on their hearts, may reflect the light, heat, and vivifying rays of the Sun of Righteousness upon their fellow-men, till all know the Lord, and the earth be filled with the brightness of his Glory ! AMEN.

INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

The Testimony of Antiquity as well as the enlightened criticism of modern times, abundantly prove, that the sacred Scriptures were written in *Hebrew* or *Hebraic-Greek*: hence it becomes indispensibly necessary, for all who would rightly understand or attempt to explain these books, to study, with great care and accuracy, the languages in which it pleased the all wise and beneficent God to communicate to man the inestimable knowledge of things eternal and Divine. The chief office of an Interpreter is the investigation of words; and seeing these are used as the signs of our ideas, it is of primary importance to ascertain, *what notion the author affixed to each particular word, when he committed it to writing: and what idea it conveys in that particular passage, which is the subject of exegetical interpretation.* If the work we undertake to interpret, be written in a dead language, an accumulation of difficulty will occur, according to the extent or paucity of the means we possess for acquiring the true signification of the words, *extant* in that language. Now the Old Testament is the only work which remains in the ancient Hebrew: nor have we any thing like a Lexicon or Glossary composed, while it was a *living* language, because it *ceased* to be a living language, so long ago as the Babylonian Captivity. It is a matter, therefore, of great importance to know the *sources* from which we derive our knowledge of the *Hebrew Language.* To be reduced to the necessity of depending wholly on the authority of others, for the sense of the Scriptures, is shameful in *teachers* of Religion; and therefore, to neglect to study the originals, is altogether inexcusable. Critcism and interpretation are so closely united, that no man can be a good *interpreter* of the Bible, who is not previously acquainted with the *Criticism* of the Bible: for it is criticism *alone*, which enables us to judge of the genuineness, whether of words, passages, or whole books. So important is the knowledge of both the original languages and the criticism of the Scriptures to the Ministers of Religion, that without it they can scarcely assume a higher name than that of *Theological Empirics.*

As it is no longer pretended, that the style of the New Testament is that of *pure Greek*, we ought duly to investigate the sources of those idioms of language, which embarrass or obscure its interpretation: and as these idioms are fitly termed *Hebraisms, Syriasms, Chaldaisms, Hellenisms*, and *Latinisms*, we believe it necessary, to a *right understanding of the sacred Scriptures*, to give a brief account of the Hebrew language, and also of the Syriac, Chaldee, and Hellenistic dialects.

THE HEBREW.

Many writers who have treated of the Hebrew lenguage, would persuade us that it was the original speech of the whole world:

but Gregory Nissen and others, have reprobated the opinion as a vain conceit of the Jews. It is most probable that the first language was composed of monosyllabic words, each of which would have a distinct ideal meaning; but if we strip the Hebrew of its numerous *vowel-points*, *affixes*, and *suffixes*, it will still remain that simple, monosyllabic language till the present time; for most of its radical words consist of only *three letters*, and are subject to little flection or variation. Some have urged the claims of the Chinese language, on these principles, and allege, moreover, that *Fohi*, the founder of that nation was the Noah of the Bible: but the Hebrew names being so descriptive of the things they are used to represent, and there being so many traces of it in all other oriental languages, we cannot refuse it the precedency of all languages, known to the literary world: for should we admit, with Le Clerc, that the primitive language is lost, still that dialect which approaches nearest the original, may be called the primitive language; and to this, none has so strong and presumptive claims as the Hebrew.

It is foreign to our object, to enter into the controversy about the origin or formation of languages: some ascribe it to the divine instruction, others, totally to human invention, and a third class of writers, to the exercise, of the human faculties, supernaturally assisted. On account of the longevity of the antedeluvians, the primitive language remained with little alteration, except a few additions as occasion required, till the dispersion of mankind at Babel:* and to that part of the world are we to look for the remains of that primitive language. Now the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Phenician, spoken by the people who dwelt nearest to Babylon are little more than different dialects of that language, in which we find the books of the Jewish Scriptures.—Moreover, Aram, the Son of Shem, settled that vast territory of country including Syria, Mesopotamia, and Chaldea, anciently known by the name, *Aram*. The *Aramic* language, therefore, was the prestine tongue of Syria, Chaldea, and Assyria: but it became divided into the Eastern or *Chaldee*, and Western or *Syriac Dialects*. The boundary of Syria to the East was the Euphrates, and the Chaldee language was that which prevailed on the east of the River. When Abram, at the call of Jehovah, left Ur of the Chaldees and came into the land of Canaan, he was called the *Hebrew*,† which word according to Lightfoot, Campbell, and others, is derived from *Ober*, to pass over, because he passed the Euphrates to come into Canaan. This opinion is confirmed by the Septuagint, which renders the word, where it first occurs, *perates a passenger*. Hence the word, *Hebrew*, originally implied *the language of those who lived beyond the Euphrates*, which is now distinguished by the name, *Chaldee*.

Abram and his posterity, having dwelt in Canaan about 200

* See Gen. xi. 1, 6, 9. † See Gen. xiv. 13.

years, forgot the Chaldee and learned the Canaanitish or Phenician dialect or language. Accordingly we find that when Jacob journeyed eastward, into the land of his ancesters, he and Laban gave different names to the same objects.* Hence, Bochart, Walton, and Le Clerc have maintained that the language of the Jewish scriptures, which is always called *Hebrew*, is no other than the native tongue of the Canaanites, which is generally called Phenician in Greek authors, and differs very little from the dialects of the Tyrians, Sidonians, and Carthagenians. Indeed Le Clerc greatly removes the obscurity of certain scriptures, by showing that the Old Testament was written in the language of idolaters, such as were the Canaanites; for by this supposition, we easily perceive the reason of the term, God, being always in the *plural*, and of *hands*, *eyes*, *ears*, and *feet*, being ascribed to the Deity. Moreover, the language of the Old Testament is never, in scripture, called Hebrew; but the language of Canaan is there frequently called the Jews' language.† That the language of the Old Testament was the same as the *Canaanitish* or *Phenician*, is evident from the circumstances, that Jews and Canaanites had intercourse without any interpreter, whereas the Egyptians and other neighbouring nations are called *people of a strange language*:‡ and that the Canaanites and Phenicians were the same people and nation, is manifest from the Septuagint, using the term *Phenicia* instead of *Canaan*.‖ Moreover in the New Testament, the same person called, by one Evangelist, a woman of *Canaan*, is denominated by another Evangelist, a *Syrophenician*.§

From a candid survey of the arguments on all sides, we draw this tenable conclusion: that the language of the Hebrews, Abraham and his descendants, was always called by the Jews, *Hebrew*, without any regard to the changes it experienced; it being at one time Chaldee, at another Phenician, and again Chaldaic· Phenician, and finally in the time of *Christ*, a mixture of Phenician, Chaldee, and Syriac, called *Syro-Chaldaic*. When Abram departed from Ur of the Chaldees, he spoke the Chaldee language, but that his posterity forgot the Chaldee or Aramic, and learned the language of Canaan is manifest from the distinction made between the Aramic or Syrian and the Jews' language, in several passages of Scripture.¶ So completely ignorant had the Jews became of the ancient language of their Patriarch, in the time of their kings, that the Chaldeans are described by the prophets, as a people whose language the Jews could not understand.** Again, during their seventy years captivity, they as completely forgot the *language of Canaan*, and learned the Chaldee, that they could not speak in the *Jews' language*, nor understand their own scriptures, which had

* See Gen. xxxi. 47. † See Nehem. xiii. 14, and Is. xix. 18, and xxvi. 11, 13. ‡ Ps. lxxx. 5, and cxiv. 1, and Jer. v. 15. ‖ Gen. xxviii. 1, 8, and xlvi. 10. Ex. vi. 15. and Josh. v. 12. § See Matth. xv. 22, and Mark vii. 24. ¶ See 2 Kings xviii. 26. Is. xxxvi. 11. ** See Is. xxxiii. 19. and Jer. v. 15.

been written previously to the Babylonian Captivity.* Our conclusion is, therefore, that the language of the Old Testament is the *Canaanitish* or *Phenician* dialect of the Hebrew; and that in this dialect are written all the books of the Old Testament, except a few passages and chapters, in Daniel and Ezra, which are in the *Chaldee dialect.*†

The seemingly great confusion, arising from the indefinite use of the term, Hebrew, both in the sacred writers and primitive Fathers, may, therefore, be easily removed by the consideration that, Hebrew, distinguished from Syriac and Chaldee, either means the language of the Israelites before the Captivity or more generally the mixt Hebrew after their return. What is generally called Hebrew in the New Testament and in the works of the Fathers, is the Syro-Chaldaic or language of Judea in the time of Christ: and as in some parts of Palestine, the Syriac prevailed, Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, uses the terms, *Syriac* and *Hebrew*, indifferently to denote the same language. It is said the *Chaldee* dialect prevailed in the South, and the Syriac in the North of Palestine; but though the forms of the letters be different, the correspondence between the two dialects is so close, that if Chaldee be written with Syriac letters without points, it *becomes Syriac*, with the exception of a single inflexion in the formation of the verbs. Hence we should not be surprised on finding even the prophet Daniel calling the same language at one time *Syriac* and at another time *Chaldee.*‡

The present Hebrew characters are *twenty two* in number and being of a square form; are therefore believed to be *Chaldee* and not the Canaanitish *Hebrew.* From a passage in the Chronicle of Eusebius, "year 4740," and another in Jerome's "Preface to 1 Kings," Joseph Scaliger inferred, that Ezra transcribed the sacred books from the ancient Hebrew character into the Chaldee, for the use of those Jews who were born during the captivity; and who were ignorant of any other alphabet, but that of the people among whom they had been educated: and, consequently, the old or Samaritan character fell into disuse. Indeed the Rabbinical writers expressly declare, that the Chaldee characters were adopted by Ezra: and all the ancient *Hebrew coins*, struck before the captivity, have their inscription in the Samaritan character. This opinion has been adopted and maintained by Walton, Cappel, and Prideaux but more especially by Joseph Dobrowsky, in his "*Dissertation on the ancient Hebrew characters,*"

The Hebrew vowel-points, has been the subject of much debate among the learned, who maintain four different opinions in relation to their antiquity: 1. that they were co-eval with the language, which opinion is strongly maintained by Jewish writers in general; 2. that they were added by Ezra, when he introduced the

* Nehem. viii. 7, 8, and xiii. 24. † See Jer. x. 11. Dan. ii. 4—chap. viii. and Ez. iv. 8—6, 10, and vii. 12—16. ‡ See Dan. i. 4, and ii. 4.

Chaldee character, regulated the marginal readings called *Keri* and *Chetib*. This is powerfully maintained by the Buxtorfs and their followers; 3. that they were added by the more ancient Masorites soon after Ezra, and used in their schools, in reading the language, but not introduced among the Rabbies, till after the composition of the Talmud; and consequently the reading of the points is the true and ancient pronunciation. If this opinion were Prideaux and Elias Levita, 4 that they are altogether the invention of the *school of Tiberias*, five hundred years after Christ. This latter opinion seems to obtain a host of followers, among whom are counted Cappel, Calvin, Luther, Casaubon, Scaliger, Erpen, Houbigant, Walton, Lowth, and Kennicott.

The *Antipunctists* affirm the letters *Aleph He*, *Vau*, and *Vood*, called *matres lectionis*, have always been vowels; and that the total absence of testimony, on behalf of the points, amounts to satisfactory proof that they are of late invention. They affirm that the Samaritan letters, ancient Jewish coins, and oldest Hebrew MSS. are without points; that the ancient versions, such as the Chaldee Paraphrases of Jonathan and Onkelos, and the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, but especially the Septuagint, read the text in many passages contrary to the authority of the points; that there are no notices of the points by the Talmudists, Cabbalists, ancient Jewish writers, nor early Christian Fathers, and that they are not used in the Keri and Chetib, nor even at the present time, in the scriptures, read in the synagogues, therefore they are void of authority.

The Advocates of the points reply, that the silence of the Talmuds, Josephus, Philo, and the ancient Fathers, is no proof against the points, but only that there was no dispute about them; that there is ancient testimony from the book, *Bahir*, which says, "*the points are to the letters, what the soul is to the body;*" that the *Keri* and *Chetib* are regulated by vowel points of the text; and there are many instances where the consonants of the margin are plainly adapted to the points in the text; therefore the points must have existed when th Keri were made, which would have otherwise been useless; that as every one was bound by the Jewish custom, to write or cause to be written, a copy of the law, once in his life, and as one blunder profaned the whole book, it was necessary to write the *Sepher-Torah*, or *book of the Law*, without points to avoid blunders, which would be inevitable, in printed copies; that the Septuagint differs as much from the consonants of the Hebrew Text as from the vowel points, and we might therefore as safely conclude, the ancient Hebrew had no consonants, as that it had no vowel points: besides there is a number of words different in signification, whose consonants are entirely the same; and therefore translators, who follow not the points, must fall into frequent mistakes about the sense; that without the points the distinction between the *conjugations* Pihel and Puhal, is totally

lost, and two *different senses*, entirely confounded; that whoever looks into the Septuagint and Hexapla of Origen, will be satisfied that the pronunciation, therein exhibited, is very different from any scheme ever proposed by the antipunctists; and finally that the kindred dialects of the Hebrew, as the Arabic and Syriac, have more or less of the points, without which there can be no certain reading or interpretation of the sacred originals.

Leaving all extravagant and arrogant assumptions out of the question, the most probable view of the history, is that adopted by Schultens, Michaelis, and Eichhorn, which is, that *Hebrew always had some points*, and that these were increased by the Masorites after the Hebrew ceased to be a living language, in order to preserve the pronunciation and render the sense more definite. The great Synagogue of Masorites and Talmudic doctors may be considered as existing from the time of Ezra till the completion of the Talmuds about the end of the fifth century. It may therefore, be supposed that the later Masorites, (though their labours should not be dispised) may have erred in making the useless *minutiae* of the points as irksome as the Talmudists have rendered many of their comments, foolish and ridiculous. Notwithstanding all who wish to study the Hebrew Bible, with exactness, will be abundantly rewarded for the additional labor of learning to read according to the Rabbinical method. The pronunciation of the Hebrew by the points, raises the tone and volubility of the sacred tongue to the majesty of the Latin and the elegance of the Greeks; but, by rejecting the points, the language sinks to the sterility and uncouthness of barbarism.

From this discourse we learn, that the Hebrew shared the versatility of languages in general, and experienced its ages of *Gold, Silver, Brass, and Iron.* "Every language," says Dr. A. Clarke, "has been more or less confounded but that of *Eternal Truth*; this is ever the same, in all countries, climes, and ages; and like that God from whom it sprang, is unchangeable and incorruptible." However, let us adore that wisdom of the Deity, which called Abram into a land where his offspring, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, might publish and promulgate the doctrines of Revelation, in the language and through the means of the most enterprising and commercial nation in the world: for the Phenicians carried their trade, and with it their language, and more or less of the Jewish religion, into all the civilized nations, accessible by the commerce of the Mediterranean.

The period from Moses to David has been esteemed as the *Golden age* of the Hebrew; from David to Hezekiah, by the intercourse of the Israelites with the neighbouring nations, a mixture of foreign words, particularly, *Aramean* was introduced. This period is called the *Silver age.* The *third period* intervened between the reign of Hezekiah and the Captivity, during which the language being neglected, became greatly corrupted by foreign

words and idioms: and the *fourth age*, which may denominated a mixture of *Iron* and *Brass*, was that which succeeded the Captivity:

We have no reason to consider the dialect which the Jews brought with them from Babylon, as entirely pure: but whatever it might be at first it cannot be imagined, that its purity would be preserved five hundred years till the time of Christ, considering the great calamities which the Jews experienced in that interval. The language of the people, who inhabited Judea during the Captivity, being chiefly Syriac, would, after the *return*, soon obtain considerable influence in the Jews' dialect: and Judea being successively subjected to the Macedonians and Romans, a mixture of Greek and Latin words would soon be introduced. Hence what is called *Hebrew* in the New Testament, and by the early Christian writers, is not the language of the Old Testament, spoken by the Jews before the Captivity, nor Chaldee, spoken at Babylon, nor the Syriac, spoken in the neighbouring country of Syria; but it is a mixture of all the three dialects with Greek and Latin words and phrases, still retaining a predominant Phenician idiom, and called by the general name of *Hebrew*, or the still more appropriate title of *Syro-Chaldaic*.

It may be thought necessary *here* to give some account of the principal sources from which we derive means of understanding and interpreting the Hebrew, and also some notices of the works which are said to remain in that language. As the Chaldee and Syriac are dialects of the Hebrew, we draw considerable information from the Syriac Version, and the Chaldee Paraphrases, which are still extant under the name of *Targums*. The Arabic being also another dialect of the Hebrew, and still a living language, affords a fruitful source of instruction; and the Septuagint and Vulgate Versions, being early translations from the Hebrew original, become useful auxiliaries, in the hands of a skillful interpreter.

THE TALMUDS.

The Jews after their dispersion continued to cultivate the Chaldee or mixt Hebrew as a learned language, and hence arose those ponderous productions called *Talmuds*, which are so highly venerated among the Jews, though in part they are little else than useless traditionary legends which, generally speaking, are unworthy the labor or pains of reading.

The word, *Talmud*, signifies *doctrine*, and the book bearing this appellation may be considered as the grand Code of Jewish doctrines and ceremonies both of a religious and civil nature. The Talmud consists of two parts, the *Mishna* or Text and the *Gemara* or Comment.

1. The *Mishna* (or *repetition* as it literally signifies) is a collection of various traditions of the Jews, and of expositions of scripture texts, which, they pretend, were delivered to Moses during

his abode on the Mount, and transmitted from him, through Aaron, Eleazar, and Joshua, to the prophets, and by those to the men of the Great Sanhedrin, from whom they passed in uninterrupted succession to Simeon and afterwards to Gamaliel, and ultimately to Rabbi Jehudah, surnamed *Hakkadosh* or the Holy. By him this digest of oral law and traditions was completed, towards the close of the second century. after the labor of forty years. From this time it has been carefully handed down among the Jews, from generation to generation; and in many cases has been esteemed beyond the written law itself. The Mishna consists of six books, each of which is entitled *order*, and is further divided into many treatises, amounting in all to sixty-three; these again are divided into chapters, and the chapters are further subdivided into sections or aphorisms. The best edition of the Mishna, unaccompanied by the Gemara, is that of Surenhusius, in 6 vols. folio, published at Amsterdam, 1698—1708, with a Latin version and the Commentaries of Rabbi Moses de Bartenora, and of Maimonides.

The *Gemaras* or commentaries are two-fold:—(1.) The Gemara of Jerusalem, which, in the opinion of Prideaux, Buxtorf, Carpzov, and other emient critics, was compiled in the third century of the Christian æra; though, from its containing several barbarous words of Gothic or Vandalic extraction, father Morin refers it to the fifth century. This commentary is but little esteemed by the Jews. (2.) The Gemara of Babylon was compiled in the sixth century, and is filled with the most absurd fables. It is held in the highest estimation by the Jews, by whom it is usually read and constantly consulted as a sure guide in all questions of difficulty. The best edition of this work is that of Berlin and Francfort, in Hebrew, in 12 volumes, folio, 1715. The Jews designate these commentaries by the term Gemara or *perfection*, because they consider them as an explanation of the whole law, to which no further additions can be made, and after which nothing more can be desired. When the Misna or text and the commentary compiled at Jerusalem accompany each other, the whole is called the *Jerusalem Talmud;* and when the commentary which was made at Babylon is subjoined, it is denominated the *Babylonish Talmud* The Talmud was collated for Dr. Kennicott's edition of the Hebrew Bible: and as the passages of Scripture were taken from manuscripts in existence from the second to the sixth century, they are so far authorities, as they show what were the readings of their day. These various readings, however, are neither very numerous nor of very great moment. Bauer states that Fromman did not discover more than fourteen in the Misna: and although Dr. Gill, who collated the Talmud for Dr. Kennicott, collected about a thousand instances, yet all these were not in strictness various lections. The Talmud, therefore, is more useful for illustrating manners and customs noticed in the Scriptures, than for the assistance it can afford in the criticism of the sacred volume.*

THE TARGUMS.

The Chaldee word TARGUM signifies, in general, any version or explanation; but this appellation is more particularly restricted to the versions or paraphrases of the Old Testament, executed in the East-Aramæan or Chaldee dialect, as it is usually called. These Targums are termed paraphrases or expositions, because they are rather comments and explications, than literal translations of the text: they are written in the Chaldee tongue, which became familiar to the Jews after the time of their captivity in Babylon, and was more known to them than the Hebrew itself: so that when the law was "read in the synagogue every Sabbath day," in pure biblical Hebrew, an explanation was subjoined to it in Chaldee; in order to render it intelligible to the people, who had but an imperfect knowledge of the Hebrew language. This practice, as already observed, originated with Ezra: as there are no traces of any written Targums prior to those of Onkelos and Jonathan, who are supposed to have lived about the time of our Saviour. It is highly probable that these paraphrases were at first merely oral; that, subsequently, the ordinary glosses on the more difficult passages were committed to writing; and that, as the Jews were bound by an ordinance of their elders to possess a copy of the law, these glosses were either afterwards collected together and deficiences in them supplied, or new and connected paraphrases were formed.

The language, in which these paraphrases are composed, varies in purity according to the time when they were respectively written. Thus, the Targums of Onkelos and the Pseudo-Jonathan are much purer than the others, approximating very nearly to the Aramæan dialect in which some parts of Daniel and Ezra were written, except indeed that the orthography does not always correspond; while the language of the later Targums whence the rabbinical dialect derives its sources, is far more impure, and is intermixed with barbarous and foreign words. Originally, all the Chaldee paraphrases were written without vowel-points, like all other oriental manuscripts: but at length some persons ventured to add points to them, though very erroneously, and this irregular punctuation was retained in the Venice and other early editions of the Hebrew Bible. Some further imperfect attempts towards regular pointing were made both in the Complutensian and in the Antwerp Polyglotts, until at length the elder Buxtorf, in his edition of the Hebrew Bible published at Basil, undertook the thankless task of improving the punctuation of the Targums, according to such rules as he had formed from the pointing which he had found in the Chaldee parts of the books of Daniel and Ezra; and his method of punctuation is followed in Bishop Walton's Polyglott.

1. *The Targum of Onkelos.*—It is not known with certainty, at what time Onkelos flourished, nor of what nation he was: Profes-

sor Eichhorn conjectures that he was a native of Babylon, first because he is mentioned in the Babylonish Talmud; secondly, because his dialect is not the Chaldee spoken in Palestine, but much purer, and more closely resembling the style of Daniel and Ezra; and lastly, because he has not interwoven any of those fabulous narratives to which the Jews of Palestine were so much attached, and from which they could with difficulty refrain. The generally received opinion is, that he was a proselyte to Judaism, and a disciple of the celebrated Rabbi Hillel, who flourished about 50 years before the Christian æra; and consequently that Onkelos was contemporary with our Saviour: Bauer and Jahn, however, place him in the second century. The Targum of Onkelos comprises the Pentateuch or five books of Moses, and is justly preferred to all the others both by Jews and Christians, on account of the purity of its style, and its general freedom from idle legends. It is rather a version than a paraphrase, and renders the Hebrew text word for word, with so much accuracy and exactness, that being set to the same musical notes, with the original Hebrew, it could be read in the same tone as the latter in the public assemblies of the Jews. And this we find was the practice of the Jews up to the time of Rabbi Elias Levita; who flourished in the early part of the sixteenth century, and expressly states that the Jews read the law in their synagogues, first in Hebrew and then in the Targum of Onkelos. This Targum has been translated into Latin by Alfonso de Zamora, Paulus Fagius, Bernardinus Baldus, and Andrew de Leon, of Zamora.

2. The *Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel.*—According to the talmudical traditions, the author of this paraphrase was chief of the eighty distinguished scholars of Rabbi Hillel the elder, and a fellow disciple of Simeon the Just, who bore the infant Messiah in his arms: consequently he would be nearly contemporary with Onkelos. Wolfius, however, is of opinion that he flourished a short time before the birth of Christ, and compiled the work which bears his name, from more ancient Targums that had been preserved to his time by oral tradition. From the silence of Origen and Jerome concerning this Targum, of which they could not but have availed themselves if it had really existed in their time, and also from its being cited in the Talmud, both Bauer and Jahn date it much later than is generally admitted: the former indeed is of opinion that its true date cannot be ascertained; and the latter, from the inequalities of style and method observable in it, considers it as a compilation from the interpretations of several learned men, made about the close of the third or fourth century. This paraphrase treats on the Prophets, that is (according to the Jewish classicification of the sacred writings,) on the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Sam. 1 & 2 Kings, who are termed the *former* prophets; and on Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets, who are designated as the *latter* prophets. Though the

style of this Targum is not so pure and elegant as that of Onkelos, yet it is not disfigured by those legendary tales and numerous foreign and barbarous words which abound in the later Targums. Both the language and method of interpretation, however, are irregular: in the exposition of the former prophets, the text is more closely rendered than in that on the latter, which is less accurate, as well as more paraphrastical, and interspersed with some traditions and fabulous legends. In order to attach the greater authority to the Targum of Jonathan Ben Unziel, the Jews, not satisfied with making him contemporary with the prophets Malachi, Zechariah, and Haggai, and asserting that he received it from their lips, have related, that while Jonathan was composing his paraphrase, there was an earthquake for forty leagues around him; and that if any bird happened to pass over him, or a fly alighted on his paper while writing, they were immediately consumed by fire from heaven, without any injury being sustained either by his person or his paper!! The whole of this Targum was translated into Latin by Alfonso de Zamora, Andrea de Leon, and Conrad Pellican; and the paraphrase of the twelve minor prophets, by Immanuel Tremellius.

3. The third Targum, which is a more liberal paraphrase of the Pentateuch than the preceding, is usually called the *Targum* of the Pseudo-Jonathan, being ascribed by many to Jonathan Ben Uzziel who wrote the much esteemed Paraphrase on the Prophets. But the difference in the style and diction of this Targum, which is very impure, as well as in the method of paraphrasing adopted in it, clearly proves that it could not have been written by Jonathan Ben Uzziel, who indeed sometimes indulges in allegories and has introduced a few barbarisms; but this Targum on the law abounds with the most idle Jewish legends that can well be conceived; which, together with the barbarous and foreign words it contains, render it of very little utility.

4. The *Jerusalem Targum*, which also paraphrases the five books of Moses, derives its name from the dialect in which it is composed. It is by no means a connected paraphrase, sometimes omitting whole verses, or even chapters; at other times explaining only a single word of a verse, of which it sometimes gives a twofold interpretation; and at others, Hebrew words are inserted without any explanation whatever. In many respects it corresponds with the paraphrase of the Pseudo-Jonathan, whose legendary tales are here frequently repeated, abridged, or expanded. From the impurity of its style, and the number of Greek, Latin, and Persian words which it contains, Bishop Walton, Carpzov, Wolfius, and many other eminent philologers, are of opinion, that it is a compilation by several authors, and consists of extracts and collections. From these internal evidences, the commencement of the seventh century has been assigned as its probable date; but it is more likely not to have been written before the eighth, or perhaps

the ninth century. This Targum was also translated into Latin by Chevalier, and by Francis Taylor.

5. The *Targum on the Megilloth*, or five books of Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations of Jeremiah, Ruth, and Esther, is evidently a compilation by several persons: the barbarism of its style, numerous digressions, and idle legends which are inserted, all concur to prove it to be of late date, and certainly not earlier than the sixth century. The paraphrase on the book of Ruth and the Lamentations of Jeremiah is the best executed portion: Ecclesiastes is more freely paraphrased; but the text of the Song of Solomon is absolutely lost amidst the diffuse *circumscription* of its author, and his dull glosses and fabulous additions.

6. *The three Targums on the book of Esther.*—This book has always been held in the highest estimation by the Jews; which circumstance induced them to translate it repeatedly into the Chaldee dialect. Three paraphrases on it have been printed: one in the Antwerp Polyglott, which is much shorter, and contains fewer digressions than the others; another, in Bishop Walton's Polyglott, which is more diffuse, and comprises more numerous Jewish fables and traditions; and a third, of which a Latin Version was published by Francis Taylor; and which, according to Carpzov, is more stupid and diffuse than either of the preceding. They are all three of very late date.

These Targums or Chaldee paraphrases, took their rise from the custom, which was introduced after the Captivity, when the Jews had forgotten the Canaanitish Hebrew, of subjoining to the portions of Scripture, read in their Synagogues, an explication in Chaldee, which had then become their vernacular tongue. Probably these Targums or paraphrases are a collection of traditionary illustrations or a compilation of previously existing comments or translations, at a much later time than that attributed to their origin by some authors. Of all the Chaldee paraphrases, the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel are most highly valued by the Jews, who implicitly receive their expositions of doubtful passages. Notwithstanding their deficiencies and interpolations, the Targums, especially of Onkelos and Jonathan are of very considerable importance in the illustration and interpretation of the scriptures. The Targum of Onkelos is a very literal and exact version, that of Jonathan is not so literal and exact. The Targums are written sometimes alternately with the Hebrew, verse by verse; sometimes in parallel columns; and sometimes in separate books: and were therefore of much value in recovering the knowledge of the Hebrew language.*

HEBRAIC OR HELLENISTIC GREEK.

The Scriptures of the New Testament were originally written

*See Professor Gerard's Institutes of Biblical Criticism, pp. 68—71. Also Horne on the Scriptures, vol. II. pp. 157—163.

in Greek, except the Gospel of Matthew and probably the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, according to the traditions of the ancients and the opinion of many Learned moderns, were written in Syro-Chaldaic, for the use of Jewish Christians. The Greek language seems, primarily, to have been derived from the same source as the Hebrew; and to have taken its rise from some of the oriental dialects, used by the Colonies which peopled Greece. Cadmus who first introduced letters into Greece, was a Phenician, and, no doubt, the letters which he introduced, were the Phenician or ancient Hebrew; but on account of the situation of the Greeks, their progress in arts and sciences, and their care in refining and improving their language, it underwent so great alterations as to become, in time, very dissimilar. The Classic Greek has, perhaps, never been excelled by any other language, in copiousness, strength, beauty, and harmony. Every adequate Judge will accede to the opinion of Horace:

Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo musa loqui.

But as it happens to the language of every people, who are divided into several districts, so it fared with the Greek; it was greatly affected by provincial dialects. The principal of these were the Attic, Ionic, Doric, Æolic, and Macedonic. The Attic most frequently occurs in the New Testament. Still more unfortunately for this precious volume, the Greek had fallen from its primitive elegance and purity, before the Septuagint version was made, or the books of the New Testament were composed. The first alteration in the Greek was effected by the Macedonians about the time of Alexander, when the phrases and idioms of that people became nationalized at Athens. Being subjected to the Macedonians, and the different states of Greece blended together in one great community, the various provincial dialects yielded to the *Communis Linqua*, which soon after became the general language of composition: yet this *Koine Dialectos*, or *common language*, says Bentley, was never at any time or place the popular idiom; but a language of the learned, as the Latin among Europeans. The style of the Greek is found most pure and correct, in those writers who preceded, or were contemporary with Demosthenes; but after him the alteration is very perceptible.

During the civil war, which followed the death of Alexander, and the revolutions of Asia and Greece, men of letters flowed to Alexandria in Egypt, and were liberally patronized by the Ptolemies. The Greek tongue became predominant in business and commerce, and was soon associated with the Coptic. The Septuagint version, principally made by Jews of Alexandria, presents singular forms of speech; being written in the Alexandrine dialect, which was a mixture of the Macedonic, Jewish, and Egyptian. In explaining the phraseology of the Septuagint and New Testament, critics have frequently drawn their examples from wri-

ters, who lived under the Lagidæ and Seleucidæ: for as some of these monarchs had invited the Jews to settle in the cities which they had built, and others had encouraged them to reside in Egypt, the intercourse between the Jews and Greeks became very great in all the commercial towns; consequently a mixture of the Greek and Hebrew idioms naturally ensued.

It appears from the terms, *Syro-Macedones* and *Syro-Hellenes*, that the Greek had obtained considerable influence in Syria during the Macedonian conquests, When the Macedonians obtained the dominion of western Asia, they filled that country with Greek cities. The Greeks also possessed themselves of many cities in Palestine, to which the Herods added many others. The Romans were rather favorable to the extension of the Greek in Palestine, it being the official language of the Procurators. Hence the Greek spread through the various classes of the Jewish nation, by usage and commercial intercourse. Indeed the Greek had been for ages before Christ, a sort of universal language in the civilized world, at least among people of rank and literature: so that Cicero said truly, "*Graeca leguntur in omnibus fere gentibus.*"

Though the New Testament be written in Greek, an acquaintance with the Greek classics will not be found so conducive to the right understanding of the proper signification of the Christian Scriptures, as an acquaintance with the ancient Hebrew Scriptures: for notwithstanding most of the words and many of the phrases of the New Testament are pure Greek, and may therefore be explained according to the usage of the classical writers, yet the language of the Septuagint and New Testament is a kind of *Hebrew-Greek*, which even to a native of Athens might have been scarcely intelligible. The *phraseology* is Hebrew and the *words* are Greek. This is what might have been expected from the writers of the New Testament who were all Jews, and whose speech was continually under the influence of a Hebrew Tang, which had become sanctified from a superstitious reverence for the language of their ancesters and sacred writings.

The *Hellenistic style* of the Greek Scriptures is the language of a Hebrew, speaking Greek. *The words are* mostly *Greek*, but delivered under the influence of a *Hebrew construction.* The Septuagint Version was made in Egypt, under the government of the Ptolemies, for the use of the Jews then settled in that country, who were in as much need of a *Greek* version, as the Jews of *Palestine* were then in need of a *Chaldee* version. The *Egyptian* Jews, to whom Greek was become their vernacular language, were of course desirous of possessing in Greek a faithful representation of the Hebrew Scriptures. But then the structure of the two languages was so widely different, that the translators, adhering to the original, more closely than perhaps necessity required, retained Hebrew *forms* and *modes* of expression, while the *words*, which they were writing, were Greek. But, as this version be-

came the Bible of all the Jews, who were dispersed throughout the countries, where Greek was spoken, it became the standard of *their* Greek language. St. Paul himself, who was born in Tarsus, and was accustomed from his childhood to hear the *Septuagint* read in the synagogue of that city, adopted the Hebrew idioms of the Greek version. And when he was removed to Jerusalem and placed under the guidance of Gamaliel, the Hebrew tincture of St. Paul's Greek could have suffered no diminution. The *other* Apostles were all natives of Palestine; as was also the Evangelist St. Mark, and probably the Evangelist St. Luke. *Their* language therefore was Syriac or Chaldee, of which the turns of expression had a close correspondence with those of the *ancient* Hebrew. Consequently, when they wrote in *Greek*, their language could not fail to resemble the language, which had been used by the Greek translators. And, as every Jew, who read Greek *at all*, (which they who *wrote* in it must have done) would read the Greek *Bible*, the style of the Septuagint again operated in forming the style of the Greek Testament.

As the writers of the New Testament were Jews, the peculiar idioms of the Oriental dialects and the habit of reading the scriptures, whether in the original or ancient Greek Version, would produce a mixture of Hebraisms and Chaldaisms in their writings. But as the Syriac and Chaldee are so very analogous, being little more than the same language, the Syriac being the form which it assumed at a later period, and that in which we have excellent versions of the holy scriptures, it will be unnecessary to notice any other than the *Hebrew*, *Syriac* and *Latin* idioms which occur in the New Testament.

HEBRAISMS.

1. Nouns of plural form are often used to express a single object when majesty, magnitude, dignity, or authority is intended, thus the words, *Master*, *Lord*, *God*, *Creator*, *face* are always plural.

2. As the Jews have but few adjectives in their language, they often use substantives to supply their place; and the abstract is put for the concrete; and this usage is often adopted in the New Testament. Hence *Kingdom and Glory* means a *glorious Kingdom.** Mouth and wisdom denotes *wise discourse.*† Philosophy and vain deceit means a vain and deceitful philosophy.‡ Body of flesh, a fleshly body.‖

3. According to the Hebrew, persons are often represented as sons or children of their ruling disposition or passion. Thus *sons of Belial* are worthless or wicked men. Children of disobedience, or of wrath, are wrathful or disobedient persons. Hence also, *children of hell*, *sons of perdition*, mean persons obnoxious or liable to these evils.

4. The Jews having no superlatives in their language employ-

* 1 Thess. ii. 12. †Luke xxi. 15. ‡Col. ii. 8. ‖Col. i. 22.

ed the phrases *of God*, *of the Lord*, to express the greatness or excellence of a thing. Accordingly a beautiful garden is called the *Garden of the Lord.* High mountains, *mountains of God.* A great wind, the *Spirit* or wind *of God.*

5. Plural nouns are sometimes intended to signify, not many, but one of many; in which usage, some suppose an ellipsis of the numeral *one.* Thus "the Ark rested on the mountains," *one of* the mountains.*—The cities in which, (in one of which) Lot dwelt.† "His Disciples," *one of them.*‡ "The Thieves," that is, *one of them.*‖

6. Men while rude studying to express themselves with force, and to magnify the qualities of things, endeavor to supply the scantiness of their language and thoughts, by redoubling or repeating words. Thus, to express *vehemence*, they repeat, My God, my God—The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.—To express *continuance*, ye shall follow justice, justice.§ To express *multitude* "the valley of Siddim was slime pits, slime pits," that is full of them.¶

7. A noun governing itself, or an adjective repeated, forms a superlative. Hence, "God of Gods" means the most high God —"servant of servants," an abject slave.** "That which is deep, deep," means the deepest or very deep."†† "Holy, holy, holy," means most holy.‡‡

8. The privileges of the first-born among the Israelites being very great, that which is chief or most eminent of any kind, is called the first-born. Accordingly Christ is called the first-born of many. The only begotten, the beginning of the creation: and this phrase has the same influence in degradation as in ascension; for first-born of death, is the most cruel death.‖‖ First-born of the poor means the poorest or most miserable.§§

9. The Hebrew having no neuter gender, sometimes the Masculine, but generally the feminine, is used; and this usage being sometimes adopted in the Greek Testament, occasions peculiar forms of speech.¶¶

10. As the Hebrews do not distinguish the cases of nouns by varying their terminations, almost all the regimens in the Hebrew are formed by means of prepositions, and the cases are, therefore, sometimes used promiscuously, as the nominative for the vocative. But when the cases of nouns are not distinguished by their form, the sense or usage of the language, must determine in which of them the word should be taken.***

*Gen. viii. 4. †Gen. xix. 29. ‡Compare Mat. xxiv. 1, and Mark xiii. 1. ‖See Mat. xxvii. 44, and Luke xxiii. 39. §Deut. xvi. 20. ¶Gen. xiv. 10. **Gen ix. 25. ††Eccles. vii. 25. ‡‡Is. vi. 3. ‖‖Job xviii. 13. §§Is. xiv. 30. ¶¶See Mat. xxi. 42. Mark xii. 11. John xvii. 3. ***Mat. xxvii. 29, Luke xii. 32, Acts vii. 59, Rom. viii. 14. Ephes. vi. 1.

11. Verbs expressive of a person's doing an action, are often used to signify his supposing or discovering the thing, or his declaring and foretelling the event, especially in prophetic writings. I and my son shall be offenders*—supposed or accounted offenders. He that findeth his life, (supposes or expects he shall find it by apostacy) shall lose it.† Make the heart of this people fat: that is, prophesy that it shall be so.‡ What God hath cleansed—declared to be clean.‖

12. Verbs expressive of a person's doing an action sometimes signify only his giving power, inclination, commandment, or permission to perform it. Joseph made (commanded to make) ready his chariot.§ *Jesus baptized*: that is commanded his disciples to baptize.¶ Why hast thou made us to err—permitted us.** Lead us not into temptation—permit us not to be led.††

13. On account of the Hebrew having only two tenses, the past and the future, there are frequent interchanges of the tenses in the New Testament after the Hebrew idiom. Hence the past has sometimes the force of the present.‡‡

14. The past tenses have sometimes the signification of the future when used to express the certainty of the event.‖‖

15. The future is used to express sometimes the present and sometimes the past:§§ and frequently in the sense of the Imperative, in negative precepts, particularly of the decalogue.

16. The imperative is often put for the future of the indicative, and hence what frequently appears as an imprecation is no more than a simple prediction; attention to this usage is of great importance in the interpretation of scripture.¶¶

17. In the New Testament the Greek verbs are sometimes used in the signification of the Hebrew conjugations, particularly, *Hiphil*, which represents the subject of the verb as causing the action to be performed by another.*** On the same principle *living bread*, *living water*,††† should be rendered bread, causing life.

18. Comparisons are often expressed by negatives, and emphases by repetition. Mercy and *not* sacrifice implies mercy rather than sacrifice.‡‡‡ Receive instruction and *not* (rather than) silver.‖‖‖ Thou shall die to die—die the death—fear with fear, are strongly emphatical.§§§

19. There are numerous Hebraisms which cannot be reduced to rule and must be learned by use and observation—*To know* often signifies to *approve*. *To hear*, denotes to *understand* or *regard*.¶¶¶

*1 Kings i. 21. †Mat. x. 30. ‡Is. vi 9, 10. ‖Acts. x. 13. §Gen. xlvi. 29. ¶John iii. 22, and iv. 1. **Is. lxiii. 17. ††Mat. vi. 13. ‡‡See Gen. xxxii. 10, Ex. xxxiii. 19, Mat. iii. 17, and xxiii. 2, John i. 15, 26, and Acts xii. 14. ‖‖Is. ix. 6, and lxiii 4, Heb. 2, 7, John iii. 13, and v. 24, and xv. 6, Rom. viii. 10. §§See Ps. i. 2, Luke xxiii 46,—Ex. xv. 5, Judges ii. 1. ¶¶See Deut. xxxii. 50, Is. liv. 14, John ii. 19. ***See Mat. v. 45, Luke xi. 53, Heb. iv. 8. †††John iv. 10, and vi. 51. ‡‡‡Hosea vi. 6, Mat. ix. 13 and xii. 7. ‖‖‖Prov. viii. 10. §§§See Gen. ii. 17, Mat. xv. 1. ¶¶¶Mat. vii. 23, xi. 15, and xvii. 5, Luke viii. 8, Acts iii. 23.

SYRIASMS.

The vernacular language of the Jews, in the time of Christ, was Aramean, which was then divided into two dialects, the Chaldee or east and the Syriac or west Aramean. The Syriac, though written in different characters and somewhat different in pronunciation, was spoken in Galilee, and differed very little in words from the Chaldee dialect which prevailed at Jerusalem: but as our Lord and his disciples principally resided in Galilee, the Syriac was predominant in their style; though, therefore, they Evangelists express themselves in Greek, their ideas are Syriac and consequently there are many Syriac words, idioms, and phrases in the New Testament, and some Greek words used in a Syriac sense. As the Syriac idiom betrayed Peter to be of Galilee, so the style of the New Testament in many parts, abundantly prove the writers to have been Galileans.

The following are Syriac words, accurring in the Greek Testament. Abba, Rabbi, Cephas, Talitha cumi, Maran atha, Mammon, &c.*

LATINISMS.

As Judea had been reduced to a Roman province in the time of Christ, from the introduction of Roman laws and the commercial intercourse of the Jews and Romans, Latin terms would soon be amalgamated with the language of Judea. So generally was the Latin introduced with the Roman conquests, that the Greek became corrupted, even in countries were it was the vernacular tongue. The Latin having become familiar to the people of Syria, during the government of the Romans, several words and phrases would naturally become nationalized: Hence we find not only latin words but even latin phraseology in some parts of the New Testament. Of these the following are adduced as examples: Census, Centurion, Custodia, Colonia. Denarius, Justus, Legion, Libertinus, Linteum, Membrana, Sudarium, Sicarius, Speculator, Taberna.†

RULES OF INTERPRETATION.

Rule I. *Ascertain what the author has actually written.* To accomplish this primary object, the criticism of the Bible becomes absolutely necessary: and unless we ascertain by its help what is the genuine text, we can have no solid foundation on which to build our interpretation. The assistance which can be rationally expected in this investigation must be derived from a careful collation of the ancient Manuscripts, Versions, and Fathers.

*See Rom. viii. 15, John i. 38; John i. 42; Mark v. 41; 1 Cor. xvi. 22 and Mat. vi. 24.

†See Mat. xvii. 25; Mark xv 39; Acts xvi. 12; Luke vii. 41; Acts i. 23; Mat. xxvi. 53; Acts vi. 9; John xiii. 4; 2 Tim. iv. 13; Luke xix. 20; Acts xxi. 38; Mark vi. 27; Acts xxviii. 16.

In forming an estimate of the MSS. we must not so much consider their number as their quality, antiquity, and agreement with the most ancient Versions: for the true reading may be preserved in a single manuscript. We may also derive help in this part of the investigation from examination of the early printed editions.

Ancient Versions are a legitimate source of emendation, unless on collation we have sufficient reason to conclude that the translators of them were mistaken. The reading of the ancient MSS. supported by the concurrence of the Ancient Versions and the sense of the text, is certainly genuine. Of all the different versions, the Septuagint of the Old and the Syriac and Old Italic versions of the New Testament are the surest guides.

The quotations of the ancient Fathers are so numerous that nearly all the sacred volume lies repeatedly scattered throughout their works. From their citations we learn what was the reading of the MSS. in their time: but in forming a judgment of their quotations we must be careful to distinguish the age, abilities, and accuracy of the writer as well as whether the work be genuine and authentic. All the means, therefore, which we possess for obtaining an accurate edition of the scriptures, is a careful and laborious comparison of the MSS. versions, and quotations of the Greek and Latin Fathers.

Critical Conjecture is a *fourth means of amending the sacred Text*, proposed by Critics, but *alone* cannot be a legitimate means of amendation unless the text be manifestly corrupted and the received reading evidently faultly: for if admitted without the utmost necessity a door would be opened to every species of corruption: and every zealous adherent to party would allege his right, and conjecture would be urged even in defiance of evidence which would be no better than subornation in a court of Justice. For this reason neither Wetstein proposed, nor Griesbach received, an alteration of words from conjecture. But though it be not allowable to alter words in the Greek Testament from conjecture, we are at full liberty to apply it to the points, accents, and marks of aspiration; for the most ancient MSS. afford no evidence on this head, and therefore we are at equal liberty to exercise our judgment as well as those writers, who have added them to the modern manuscripts. In this department the critical conjectures of Bowyer in his edition of the Greek Testament 1782 are of real value.

Conjectural readings, strongly supported by the sense, connexion, the nature of the language, or similar texts, may sometimes be probable, especially when it can be shown that they would easily have given occasion to the present reading: and readings first suggested by conjecture have sometimes been afterwards found to be actually in manuscripts, or in some version: but a conjectural reading, unsupported by any manuscripts, and unauthorised by similarity of letters, by the connexion and context of the passage

itself, and by the analogy of faith, is manifestly to be rejected.

No one should attempt this kind of emendation who is not most deeply skilled in the sacred languages; nor should critical conjectures ever be admitted into the text, for we never can be certain of the truth of merely conjectural readings. Were these indeed to be admitted into the text, the utmost confusion and uncertainty would necessarily be created. The diligence and modesty of the Masorites are in this respect worthy of our imitation: they invariably inserted their conjectures in the margin of their manuscripts, but most religiously abstained from altering the text according to their hypotheses: and it is to be regretted that their example has not been followed by some modern translators of the Old and New Testament (and especially the latter;) who, in order to support doctrines which have no foundation whatever in the sacred writings, have not hesitated to obtrude their conjectures into the text.

Preparations have been made for the Hebrew Bible by Kennicot and De Rossi of Parma, who have collated above a thousand MSS. from all parts of the world: and for the Septuagint by Winchel Bos. and Holmes; the last of whom, collated above 300 Greek MSS. thirty Greek Fathers, eleven editions of the Greek, and nearly thirty Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Arabic, and Sclavonic MSS. A still more complete apparatus has been furnished for the New Testament by the labors of Mill, Bengel, Wetstein, Birch, Alter, Matthai, and Griesbach; who have collated near five hundred MSS. from all nations and of all ages from the fourth century, as well as all the ancient versions and Fathers. Hence we have at present, materials for nearly an immaculate edition of the sacred scriptures.

Though for general use the excellent edition of Griesbach be sufficiently accurate, being incomparably superior to all others; yet it may not be improper here to subjoin some general rules for the selection and determination of various readings: referring the student notwithstanding to Griesbach's Prolegomena,* and Gerard's "Institutes of Biblical Criticism."

*The substance of Griesbach's Canons, which I have thought of too much importance to be left unnoticed, is here translated from his Prolegomena and presented to the reader.

1. A short reading unless entirely destitute of the authority of the more ancient and important witnesses, is preferable to one more verbose; for critics and transcribers are much more prone to add than to omit. Scarcely ever have they left out any thing but they have added many things.

2. More difficult and obscure readings are to be preferred to one in which all is so plain and intelligible that the copyist may easily understand it: for these readings by their obscurity vex the transbribers.

3. A rough reading is preferable to that in which the language flows gentlely and agreeably: for a harsh reading containing an elipsis, hebraism, or solecism is more offensive to the usual style of the Greeks.

4. The more unusual reading is better than that which presents nothing un-

The evidences by which various readings may be examined, are of two kinds,—external,—and internal; the former, arising from the authority of MSS. versions, and quotations; the latter, from the nature of the languages, the sense and connexion, and the known occasions of false readings; parallel places partake of the nature of both. When the evidences of both kinds concur in favour of a reading, there can be no doubt that it is the genuine reading; and, therefore, we have full assurance of the genuineness of the great bulk of the Scriptures as contained in all the common editions. When the evidence for and against a reading is divided, the determination must be made according to the circumstances of each particular case. If the external evidence stands on the one side, and the internal on the other, the former ought, in general, to determine the question, for it is the most direct. But, the internal evidence may, notwithstanding, be so strong, as to overbalance a great degree of external evidence; particularly, where the reading supported by the latter is palpably false, or, were the introduction and prevalence of it can be easily accounted for, without supposing it genuine, as in copies plainly framed in conformity to the Masora. Often both the external and internal evidence, is partly for one reading, and partly for another; and they are divided with so great varieties of circumstances, that no rules of deciding, strictly universal, can be laid down.

But, if we distinguish various readings into four classes—certainly genuine—probable—dubious—and false; it may be possible to determine, with sufficient precision, the circumstances which entitle a reading to be placed in one or another of these classes.

usual: for words that are rare and phrases and constructions that are unusual, are preferable to those which are more common, and are therefore more unlikely to have been inserted.

5. Expressions that are less emphatic, unless the scope and context of the sacred writer require emphasis, are more likely to be the genuine reading, than those which have, or seem to have greater force or emphasis: for Copyists which have only a smattering of learning, are much pleased with emphasis.

6. That reading is to be preferred, which gives a sense apparently false, but which on thorough investigation, proves to be the true one.

7. Among the many readings of any one place, that which manifestly favors the dogmas of Orthodoxy, or is suited to nourish monastic sanctity, should be suspected: for since almost all the manuscripts which are extant, were written by monks and others addicted to the Catholic party, it is not credible than any of them should neglect to introduce a reading that might seem to confirm more clearly the dogmas of the Catholics, or more effectually overthrow reputed heresy.

8. Those readings which arise by the negligence of scribes, from repetitions of words or clauses which went immediately before, or followed closely after, as well as all those which appear to be glosses or interpretations of critics, should be disregarded as of no value.

9. All readings introduced into the Greek Text from the Latin Versions, or from the Commentaries and notes of the Fathers as well as those which arose from Lectionaries, should be rejected.

Greater is the authority of a reading found in only a few manuscripts of different characters, dates, and countries, than in many manuscripts of a similar complexion. But, of manuscripts of the same family or recension, the reading of the great number is of most weight. The evidence of manuscripts is to be weighed, not enumerated: for the agreement of several manuscripts is of no authority, unless their genealogy (if we may be allowed the term) is known; because it is possible that a hundred manuscripts that now agree together may have descended from one and the same source.

1. Readings are certainly right, and that in the very highest sense at all consistent with the existence of any various reading, which are supported by several of the most ancient, or the majority of MSS. by all or most of the ancient versions; by quotations; by parallel places, if there be any, and by the sense; though these readings be not found in the common editions, nor, perhaps, in any printed edition.

2. Readings are certainly right, which are supported by a few ancient MSS. in conjunction with the ancient versions, quotations, parallel places, and sense; though they be not found in most MSS nor in the printed editions; especially, when the rejection of them in the latter can be easily ascertained.

3. Readings in the Pentateuch, supported by the Samaritan copy, a few Hebrew MSS. the ancient versions, parallel places, and the sense, are certainly right, though they be not found in the generality of Hebrew MSS. nor in editions.

4. Ancient MSS. supported by some of the ancient versions, and the sense, render a reading certainly right, though it be not found in the more modern: and when supported by parallel places, and the sense, may show a reading to be certainly right. Likewise the concurrence of the most ancient, or of a great number of MSS. along with countenance from the sense, is sufficient to shew a reading to be certainly right.

5. The concurrence of the ancient versions is sufficient to establish a reading as certainly right, when the sense, or a parallel place, shows both the propriety of that reading, and the corruption of what is found in the copies of the original.

Readings certainly genuine, ought to be restored to the text of the printed editions, though hitherto admitted into none of them, that they may henceforth be rendered as correct as possible; they ought, likewise, to be adopted in all versions of Scripture; and till this be done, they ought to be followed in explaining it.

There are various readings, *probably* genuine; when the evidence preponderates, but is not absolute decisive, in their favor; of which kind, as criticism is not always susceptible of certainty, are far the greatest part of various readings; and the degrees of probability being infinite, according to the numberless minute alterations of circumstances, down from certainty to perfect doubt-

fulness, it is impossible to enumerate fully all the cases which fall under this head; but the most general may be distinguished.

1. Of two readings equally, or almost equally, supported by external evidence, that is probable, which best suits the sense, or the nature of the language, or which could not, so readily as the other, have been written by mistake. Again, the sense, and other internal evidences, may even render the reading of a few MSS. probable, in opposition to that of the greater number, and of versions and quotations.

2. One or a few ancient versions, may render a reading probable, when it is strongly supported by the sense, connexion, or parallel places, in opposition to one which suits not these, though found in other versions and in MSS: and the concurrence of all, or most of the ancient versions, in a reading not found in MSS. now extant, renders it probable, if it be agreeable to the sense, though not absolutely necessary to it.

Probable readings may have so high a degree of evidence, as justly entitles them to be inserted into the text, in place of the received reading much less probable. Such as have not considerably higher probability than the common ones, should only be put on the margin; but, they, and all others, ought to be weighed with impartiality.

Readings are *dubious*, when the evidence for, and against them, is so equally balanced, that it is difficult to determine which of them preponderates

1. When MSS. versions, and other authorities, are equally, or almost equally, divided between readings which all suit the sense and connexion, it is difficult to determine which of them ought to be preferred.

2. The sense, and other internal evidences, may plead so strongly for one reading, and the authority of MSS. and versions so strongly for another, as to render it doubtful which ought to be preferred; and both the external and the internal evidence may be so much divided between two readings, as to render it doubtful which of them demands the preference.

No dubious reading should be taken into the text, in place of what is already there; for, no alteration ought to be made in the received copies, without positive reason; and, such dubious readings as are already in the text, should be marked as such, and the others put on the margin; but, every person is at liberty to use his own judgment in choosing which he pleases.

There are readings which are *wrong;* and of this kind, are far the greatest part of the variations from the received copies; but, to it belong, likewise, several which have, by the injudiciousness, the inattention, or prejudices of transcribers and editors, been admitted into these; and such readings are either certainly or probably wrong.

1. All readings are certainly wrong, which stand in opposition

to the several classes of readings certainly genuine; of which, therefore, many examples have been already given; but others may, without impropriety, be added; particularly, such as have been very generally received, and yet bear plain marks of their being corruptions, as implying barbarism, inconsistency, or the like: for all readings which imply barbarism, solecism or absurdity, may be pronounced certainly wrong, though we know of no reading, certainly right, to be substituted in their place.

2. Readings, certainly or very probably false, ought to be expunged from the editions of the Scriptures, and departed from in versions of them, however long and generally they have usurped a place there, as being manifest corruptions, which impair the purity of the sacred books.

Rule II. *Ascertain the meaning which the writer attached to his own words.* Whether we speak or write, it must be our object to be understood; and as words are signs of our ideas, every author will use such words as he believes will convey to the mind of his reader, the thoughts of which he intended his words to be the vehicle, otherwise his words would be *fallacious* signs. If a person utter certain words, to which another attaches the same ideas as the speaker, the one is said to *understand* the other; because he comprehends his true meaning. To interprete, therefore, a word in any language, we must know the idea affixed to that word by those who speak that language. But if the writing be in a dead language, the difficulty of interpretation is greatly increased. Recourse must be had to a Lexicon, the compiler of which may not have had sufficiently numerous and multifareous writings to enable him to understand the usage of that language, in its full extent. Besides the particular words under investigation may be of rare occurrence. This often happens in the Scriptures: and though in such cases, different classical authors are to be consulted, yet frequently words are used, in the New Testament, in such a sense as cannot be learned from the whole list of classic authors, in the Greek language. In such case we must have recourse to the Hebrew; and observe the sense in which similar terms are used by the Old Testament writers. In vain do we attempt the explanation of the words *Holy*, *sanctified*, *righteous*, *righteousness*, *justification* and similar terms by all the Greek writers, or the aid of any modern language.

When we are carried from the New Testament to the Old, the scantiness of language frequently impells us onward to the kindred dialects of the Hebrew. Hence, the Syriac and Arabic versions, and the Chaldee paraphrases become very important, not only in tracing the derivations but also in attaining the meaning of the word or phrase under examination. Reference may be also made with great advantage, on many occasions, to the Septuagint and Vulgate, which, being early and close translations, frequently retain not only the sense but even the very idiom of the

original. *The etymology of the word should ever be sought.* We admit that on some particular occasions this rule may fail, but it will generally hold. There can be no propriety in perverting a word from its original meaning, and is seldom done where necessity does not make the case urgent—nor should a *word* ever be supposed to import any other idea than its *general* and *received* meaning, unless the strongest reasons can be adduced to prove that its common acceptation should be abandoned.

Rule III. *Ascertain the particular sense of each phrase or sentence.* Often it will happen that when we have attained the general import of each particular word, the rendering of the whole phrase becomes perfectly unintelligible, or the sense altogether different from what was intended by the original author. Hence the absolute necessity of a perfect acquaintance with the grammar, usage, and idiomatical phraseology of the language we interprete, and of that into which the translation is to be made. But a knowledge of verbal construction will not be sufficient. We must frequently betake ourselves to the consideration of a variety of particulars.

1. *We must carefully inquire into the style, character, and Historical circumstances of the author.* The words of an author must not be so explained as to make them inconsistent with his known style, character, sentiments, and situation, nor with the known circumstances in which he wrote. Under the phrase, *historical circumstances*, we should include the *time*, the *place*, the *occasion*, and the *Biblical antiquities*, which tend to illustrate the History, Geography, learning, opinions, sects, manners and customs of the age and people with whom the author was conversant.

The knowledge of the author's history, situation, and manner of conceiving and expressing things, contributes much more to our entering into his full meaning, and is often absolutely necessary for this purpose

The parts of Scripture, in which peculiarities of manner chiefly appear, are the argumentative parts. The principle of these are the writings of Paul, who was plainly a man eminent for extensive views, warmth of imagination, and quickness of conception; and this turn of mind occasions several peculiarities in his manner, which it is absolutely necessary to attend to, in order to our understanding his epistles.

The *scope* and *design* of a book of Scripture is to be collected from its own occasion, and from attention to its general tenor, to the tendency of the several topics, and to the force of the leading expressions; for perceiving all which, repeated and connected perusals of the book itself are the best means.

Such knowledge of their particular design in writing, as we can attain, will contribute very much to our understanding them, and that in proportion to its clearness and certainty; but some knowledge of it is, in many cases, absolutely necessary for our at all entering into their meaning.

The *design* of an epistle is the great key to the whole of it. Till it is discovered, all must appear involved in obscurity and confusion. When it is fully ascertained, all becomes regular, distinct, and clear. A just conception of the scope of an epistle, contributes greatly to our discovering the plan and distribution of the whole, the tendency of the several members, and the manner in which the arguments are conducted; and shows them all uniting in one point. Knowledge of the general scope of an epistle, is often the best or the only means of fixing the sense of particular expressions used in it; not only of the leading expressions which run through it, but even of the more incidental ones, which are sometimes selected with a plain view to promote it.

Knowledge of *the time* when a book was written, sometimes shews the reason, and the propriety of things said in it. Though there be great difficulty in ascertaining the precise date of many of the books of Scripture, yet that of several of them may be determined with sufficient evidence; and whenever it can be determined, it will shew the beauty of some figure, the force of some expression, or full meaning of some passage. Hence it has often been mentioned, as what would be of considerable use, that the books of Scripture be placed, or, at least read, in the order in which they were written. Inattention to, or ignorance of, the real date of a book, often occasions mistake concerning the meaning of particular passages.

The *occasion* of writing any part of Scripture, when known, is of great use for ascertaining the scope and design; which should be determined in conformity to that occasion. The particular occasion, or special reason, for writing any book of Scripture, must be collected from history, from intimations in other parts of the Scripture, from openings in the book itself; and is, in different instances, discoverable with different degrees of ease and certainty. Knowledge of the particular occasion, or the special reason for writing any part of Scripture, is of the very greatest importance for throwing light upon it; as, to this, it often has a reference throughout.

2. *Carefully consider the meaning which would be naturally affixed to the author's words, by the persons for whom he wrote*: for that meaning which would be plain and obvious to them, for whom the work was written, should not be abandoned but through necessity. There is a kind of natural compact between those who write and those who speak a language, by which they are naturally bound to use words in a certain sense: he therefore who uses such words, in a different signification, violates that compact. Accordingly we perceive it to be of the highest importance to be well acquainted with the historical circumstances, views, and manners of the people to whom those writings were addressed.

3. *In obscure phrases, consult the connexion, parallel passages, the analogy of faith, the ancient versions, Fathers, and modern translators.*

annotators, and Commentators. No explanation should be admitted but that which suits the *context*, and to ascertain the meaning of a single verse, it will often be necessary to read carefully a few verses, the whole paragraph, and sometimes a whole chapter or book. The comparison of the proceeding and subsequent parts of a written composition or discourse, will often enable us to determine the signification which is best adapted to the passage under investigation. The connexion is of so great importance for the interpretation of scripture, that its true sense can be apprehended only by explaining every sentence and expression according to the place in which it stands, and the relation which it bears to what precedes, and what follows. In like manner, ambiguous expressions must be restricted, among their several significations, to that one which suits the connexion.

In a piece of reasoning, every proposition must be considered in its conexion with the whole argument; if it be a principle, or medium of proof, in relation to the point intended to be proved; if an inference, in relation to the premises whence it is deduced; if only an illustration, in reference to the purpose for which it is brought.

Parallel passages are such as have some resemblance, and are of considerable importance in interpreting such parts of Scripture as are obscure or uncertain. A *Real Parallelism* or *Analogy of Scripture* is where the same subject is treated either in the same words, or in others that are more clear, full, and copious. Parallelisms are either historical or doctrinal. *Historical* parallelisms are those in which the same *event* is related; and are of great use for *the understanding* of the Four Gospels, where the same things are often related with different degrees of fullness and perspicuity. A *doctrinal* Parallelism is that in which the same *thing is taught.* For the investigation of Parallelisms, Concordances and Bibles with judicious and numerous marginal references, are highly useful. The best concordances are those of Buxtorf and Taylor for the Hebrew Bible, that of Trommius for the Septuagint, that of Schmidius for the Greek Testament, and those of Cruden and Butterworth for the English Bible.

In many Bibles with marginal references there is not sufficient care taken to select passages that are truly parallel; and hence the reader spends much time in vain, tossing the leaves of his Bible to no purpose. The following rules are therefore suggested.

First, passages are, in the strictest sense, parallel, in which, either with or without a quotation, the same thing is said in the same, or nearly the same, words; and if, in these, the agreement be perfect, they shew the integrity, but cannot contribute much to the illustration of each other; but there is seldom or ever such perfect agreement; and, therefore, passages of this kind generally throw some light on one another.

Secondly, those passages of Scripture are parallel, which relate

the same facts. They are numerous: and the comparison of them with one another is productive of great advantage.

Thirdly, passages are parallel, in which the same words or idioms are used in different connexions, or on different subjects; and the comparison of such passages is of very great utility, for ascertaining the meaning of these words or idioms.

Analogy of Faith is a scriptural phrase, borrowed from the language of the New Testament,* and is of high importance in our investigation of the scriptures. It may be defined *the harmonious testimony of the sacred writers to the fundamental doctrines of faith and practice.* According to this analogy, that view or interpretation of dubious or obscure passages ought always to be adopted which is most consonant to the whole scheme of Religion: therefore *no doctrine* can belong to the analogy of Faith which is founded on a *single Text;* for every essential doctrine of religion is repeated in a variety of places; and single sentences must be taken in connexion with the whole discourse. On the other hand, a doctrine manifest from the scope or tenor of Revelation must not be set aside, by a few obscure passages: moreover doubtful or figurative passages must never be interpreted in such a sense, as to make them contradict plain ones; but the whole system of Revelation must be so explained as to be harmonious and consistent.

In forming the analogy of faith all the plain texts relating to one subject, or article, ought to be taken together, impartially compared, the expressions of one of them restricted by those of another, and explained in mutual consistency, and that article deduced from them all in conjunction; not, as has been most commonly the practice, one set of texts selected, which have the same aspect, explained in their greatest possible rigour; and all others, which look another way, neglected or explained away, and tortured into a compatibility with the opinion, in that manner partially deduced.

That interpretation of a particular passage which is most favorable to a real, or supposed article of faith, is not, on that account, to be always preferred; and the most obvious and natural sense ought to be set aside, only when it is absolutely contradictory to something plainly taught in Scripture; but the opposite way has often been taken by all sects.

Versions give great assistance for understanding the sense of Scripture, even to those who are acqainted with the originals, wherever the translators were more skilful in these languages, or bestowed greater attention, or had superior advantages of any kind. As some versions are made with greater skill and exactness than others, and some parts of every version, with greater than other parts of it; the comparison of different versions, and the selection of the preferable rendering from them all, contributes very much to our obtaining the true sense of Scripture.

*Rom. xii. 6.

Neither the ancient versions, nor the modern, ought to be preferred absolutely, in all cases; for the deviations of later translators from the renderings of the earlier, are sometimes to the better, and sometimes to the worse: But significations of words pointed out by such ancient versions, are significations which we may be sure that the words really had; and we may, without scruple, prefer them to the more modern and common renderings, when the sense or other circumstances give countenance to them.

The ancient versions, being the works of men who had several advantages above the moderns for understanding the original languages, and the phraseology of Scripture; and those of the Old Testament, in particular, being one of the principle means by which the knowledge of the Hebrew was recovered, and, by more careful attention to which, it may be rendered still more perfect; there can be no doubt but they generally give us the true sense of the Scripture, and that often in places where we could scarcely have discovered it by any other means.

The *Fathers* are not entitled to our adoration, neither do they merit our contempt. If some of them were weak and credulous, others of them were both learned and judicious. In what depends purely on reason and argument, we ought to treat them with the same impartiality we do the moderns, carefully weighing what is said, not who says it. In what depends on testimony, they are, in every case, wherein no particular passion can be suspected to have swayed them, to be preferred before modern interpreters or annotators. I say not this to insinuate that we can rely more on their integrity, but to signify that many points were with them a subject of testimony, which, with modern critics, are matter merely of conjecture, or at most of abstruse and critical discussion. It is only from ancient authors, that those ancient usages, in other things as well as in language, can be discovered by us, which to them stood on the footing of matters of fact, whereof they could not be ignorant. Language, as has been often observed, is founded in use; and ancient use, like all other ancient facts, can be conveyed to us only by written testimony. Besides, the facts, regarding the import of words (when controversy is out of the question) do not, like other facts, give scope to the passions to operate; and if misrepresented, they expose either the ignorance or the bad faith of the author to his cotemporaries. I do not say, therefore, that we ought to confide in the verdict of the fathers as judges, but we ought to give them an impartial hearing as, in many cases, the only competent witnesses. And every body must be sensible that the direct testimony of a plain man, in a matter which comes within the sphere of his knowledge, is more to be regarded, than the subtile conjecture of an able scholar, who does not speak from knowledge, but gives the conclusion he has drawn from his own precarious reasonings, or from those of others.*

*Campbell's Four Gospels, fourth Prelim. Dissertation.

Scholiasts and *Annotators* are those who write short notes, illustrative of an author's meaning and allusions; and study to express themselves more *concisely* than Commentators. Sometimes one of these short notes will more effectually tend to illucidate the import of a phrase or sentence, than a long and dogmatical comment. But a judicious commentator will avoid all prolix, extraneous, and unnecessary discussions, as well as far-fetched explanations, and will bring every philological aid to bear on passages that are difficult and obscure. Commentators ought not omit a single passage that possesses more than ordinary difficulty, though the contrary is the case with many, who expatiate very copiously on the more easy passages of scripture, while they either scarcely touch on those which are really difficult, or altogether omit to treat of them. The province of the Commentator is to remove every difficulty that can impede the biblical reader, and facilitate his studies, by rendering the sense of the sacred writings more clear and easy to be apprehended.

The best Commentators and Translators *only* should be read; The Literal and Critical should be preferred: and among these we may mention Ainsworth, Wetstein, Lowth, Whitby, Calmet, Newcombe, Wall, Campbell, Priestley, Poole, Goadby, Clarke, Locke, Benson, Doddridge, Mc Knight, Hamm nd, Le Clerc, Boothroyd, Beausobre, and L' Enfant. But it is truly painful to reflect that out of this venerable list of Commentators, not one nor all of them collectively, will teach the prominent and uniform doctrines of Revelation. Two causes have powerfully operated to this unhappy state of things. They have supposed the common creeds of the Churches to be the analogy of Faith, to which they sought conformity; and laboring under the influence of an evil education, they have blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, that the truth and fear of Almighty have in a degree been hid from them. Notwithstanding the student may highly profit, by consulting their writings, for they frequently breathe both the language of true literature and piety.

If the interpretation of the Scripture were easy and obvious, there would be little or no *diversity* in the explanations, which different commentators have given of the same passage. But if we compare the *Greek* with the *Latin* commentators, we shall frequently find such a variety of interpretation, as would appear almost impossible to be extracted from the same text. If we compare the *Jewish* commentators, either with the Greek, or with the Latin, we shall find as great a variety, though a variety of a different kind. If we compare our English commentators with any of the preceding, we shall find no diminution in the variety of interpretation. Nor do we find uniformity, either among commentators of the same language, or even among commentators of the same Church.

The *rule*, by which the Church of Rome decides in the interpretation of Scripture, is that which is commonly known by the

name of *Tradition*: and, as the meaning of Scripture is made *subject* to this Rule, the Rule itself is necessarily considered as *independent* of Scripture. It is represented, therefore, as derived from the Apostles through a *different* channel than that of their *own writings*. It is represented as a *doctrine* handed down by the *Fathers* of the Church, who are considered as the depositories of this Rule, whence it is inferred that the expositions in which *they* agree, are the *true* expositions of Scripture. Now all this is mere matter of *opinion*, and is calculated solely to support the credit of the Church of Rome. There is not the slightest *historical* evidence, that the Apostles transmitted to posterity any Rule, but what is recorded in the New Testament. The *Fathers* therefore are precisely on the same footing with respect to the *authority* of their interpretations, as the commentators of the *present* age.

When our reformers had discarded *Tradition*, as a guide to the meaning of Scripture. They interpreted the *Bible*, as they would have interpreted any other work of antiquity; and for that purpose they employed the erudition, by which our early Reformers were so highly distinguished. When they abandoned therefore the guidance of *Tradition*, they supplied its place by *Reason* and *Learning*. These invaluable substitutes, these qualities of sterling worth, have been exchanged in modern times for baser metal; and the Scriptures have been committed to the guidance of disordered imaginations. Nay, our Reformers themselves have been pressed into the service of ignorance and fanaticism; and expressions which they applied to *one* purpose have been grossly misapplied to *another*.

Of These expressions therefore it is necessary to give an explanation. One of these expressions is, 'that the Bible is its *own* interpreter.' An expression, meant only to exclude *Tradition*, has been made a pretence for the exclusion of *Theological Learning*; and the maxim, that the Bible is its own interpreter, has been carried so far in the present, as well as in a former age, that men, who can scarcely read the Bible, have dreamt that they are able to *expound* it.

Rule IV. *Carefully distinguish the figurative language of the Scripture.* All languages are more or less figurative, but they are most so in their early state. Then scarcity of words makes it necessary to extend their use beyond the literal sense. Besides figurative language presents a kind of picture to the mind, and thus delights while it instructs. The Hebrew is highly figurative both in the prophetical and poetical parts of the Old Testament: and the discourses of Christ are not less figurative than the language of the Prophets. If a word have only one sense, that is *literal*. If it have many, that which most easily gives rise to all the rest is the primary; that which most resembles it must be the second, and so onward, till we form a *genealogy* of senses. No Lexicographer has paid so much attension to this genealogy of senses, as Schleusner in his superexcellent Lexcon to the Greek Testament.

The chief figure which merits the attention of an interpreter is *Metaphor*; for it is more frequently employed than all other rhetorical figures collectively. As similitude is the foundation of figurative language, in general, it is especially of Metaphor. Indeed a Metaphor is itself a simile, though it does not assume the form of a simile. Thus if we say of a theologian, he supports the church as a pillar does an edifice, we use a simile, but if we contract the expression and say he is a pillar of the church, the simile is converted into a Metaphor, and the word pillar changes its *literal* for a *metaphorical* sense.

An allegory may be considered as a continued Metaphor. The term, according to its original denotes a representation of *one thing* intended to excite the representation of *another*. Every allegory must be submitted to a two-fold examination. In the interpretation of the narrative, we are concerned only with the literal import of the *words*; in the interpretation of the allegorical representation we are then concerned with the interpretation of *things*. The narrative itself is commonly fictitious, but the object of the allegory is to convey some useful *moral*. In the Parable of the *Sower* our Saviour first gives the narrative or *immediate* representation of the Allegory, then to the disciples he gave the *ultimate* representation, or the allegorical *interpretation*.*

The literal interpretation of the Scriptures is to be followed wherever it does not involve an obscurity, impossibility, or something contrary to the context, analogy, or scope of the passage; and figurative expressions, which chiefly occur in the moral parts of Scripture, ought to be regulated by those that are plain and of easy interpretation. The real sense of a passage, is not any sense which the words will bear, nor any sense which is true in itself; but only that which was intended by the writer in that particular passage.

*There are other figures of speech which deserve the Reader's attention: these are *Metonomy*, *Synecdoche*, *Irony*, and *Hyperbole*. In *Metonomy* the *cause* is put for the effect, as Christ for his doctrine; Rom. xvi. 9. The Author for his book; Luke xvi. 29, and xxiv. 27. Mouth and tongue for speech; Deut. xvii. 6, and Mat. xviii. 16. 2 The effect for the cause, as when God is called salvation, and Christ wisdom and righteousness. 1 Cor. i. 30. 3 The quality for the subject as circumcision for the circumcised. Rom. iii. 30. Sin for sinners. Is. i. 18.

Synecdoche is a figure in which the whole is put for a part and the part for the whole, certain numbers for uncertain *Irony* says one thing and means another: as Elijah addressing the Prophets of Baal, 1 Kings xviii. 27, and Solomon the young man, Eccl. xi. 9; see also judges x. 14, and Mark viii. 9. Hyperbole, greatly magnifies or diminishes beyond the proper limits, as when lofty things are said to reach up to heaven, and rivers of tears to run from the eyes.

HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The History of the Scriptures is of the very highest importance to the biblical Student, and is comprehensive and diversified. But as all that can be given here, is only that department which tends immediately to the Criticism of the New Testament I shall confine myself to brief notices of the *Various Readings*, Manuscripts. Versions, Printed Editions, and the Chronology of the New Testament.

All intelligent persons must know, that before the invention of Printing in the fifteenth century, the sacred scriptures, like all other writings, must have existed only in Manuscript: or by oral tradition. If by oral tradition, they must have been at some time reduced to manuscript. These records written on paper or parchment, being considered a revelation of God, would be frequently transcribed, and the copies greatly multiplied. Wherever Jews or Christians were dispersed, they would carry with them copies of the Jewish or Christian Scriptures; and these copies would be more or less accurate, as they were less or more remote from the Autographs of the sacred writings; or as they had been transcribed by more or less skilful persons.

The Greek manuscripts of the Gospels, with which we are acquainted, amount to more than three hundred and fifty. But among all these manuscripts there is none, which is so far entitled to precedence, as to be received for the *true* copy, of which we are in search. In fact the truth lies *scattered* among them all: and in order to obtain the truth, we must *gather* from them all. Nor is an examination of these manuscripts, numerous as they are, alone sufficient for the object, which we have in view. The quotations from the Greek Testament in the voluminous writings of the Greek fathers, must likewise be examined, that we may know what *they* found in *their* Greek manuscripts. The ancient versions must also be consulted, in order to learn what the writers of those versions found in *their* copies of the Greek Testament. When all these collections from manuscripts, fathers, and versions, have been formed, and reduced into proper order, we have *then* to determine in every single instance, which among the various readings is probably the genuine reading. And that we may know *how* to determine, we must establish laws of criticism, calculated to counteract the cause, which produced the variations, and, by these means, to restore the *true* copy, of which we are in search.

"Now it cannot be supposed that labours, for which, when taken collectively, no single life is sufficient, would be recommended even by a zealot in his profession, as forming a regular part of theological study. Those labours are unnecessary for *us;* they have been already undertaken, and executed with success. But we must make ourselves acquainted with the causes, which produced the variations in question, or we shall never know, whether the laws

of criticism, which profess to remedy that evil, are founded in truth or falsehood. We must inquire therefore, first, into the causes of the evil, and then into the remedies, which we shall find have been applied with great success.

The manuscripts of the Greek Testament, during the fourteen hundred years, which elapsed from the apostolic age to the invention of printing, were exposed, like all other manuscripts, to mistakes in transcribing: and as every copy had unavoidably *some* errors, those errors multiplied with the multiplication of the copies. Letters, syllables, and words were added, omitted, or transposed, from mere *carelessness* in writing, whether the writer transcribed from a manuscript before him, or wrote, as was frequently the case, from the dictation of another. In the latter case, his *ear* might be deceived by a similarity in the *sound* of different words; in the former case, his *eye* might be deceived by a similarity in their *form*, by different words having the same final syllable, or by different sentences having the same final word. At other times, a transcriber misunderstood the manuscript, from which he copied, either by falsely interpreting its abbreviations, or falsely dividing the words, where they were written (as in the most ancient manuscripts) without intervals. Or the fault might be partly attributable to the manuscript itself, in cases, where its letters were wholly or partly effaced or faded.

But the greatest variations arose from alterations made by *design*. The Transcribers of the Greek Testament were not bound, like the transcribers of the Hebrew Bible, by rules prescribed to them in a Masora, or critical law book: hence they often took the liberty of *improving*, as they supposed, on that manuscript, of which it was their business to have given only a copy; a liberty similar to that, which is now taken in a printing-office, where a compositor often improves on the manuscript of an author. Hence, a native of Greece, accustomed to hear his own language without an admixture of Oriental idioms, and regarding therefore a Hebraism or a Syriasm, in the light of a solecism, would accordingly correct it, not considering or not knowing, that these Hebraisms and Syriasms are the very idioms, which we should expect from Greek writers, who were born or educated in Judea: and which therefore form a strong argument for the authenticity of their writings. At other times, these same improvers, when they remarked that one Evangelist recorded the same thing more fully than another, regarded this want of perfect coincidence as an imperfection, which they deemed it necessary to remove, by supplying the shorter account from the longer. Nor did they spare even the quotations from the Old Testament, whether those quotations were transcripts from the Septuagint, or translations from the Hebrew by the author himself. If they only differed from the *transcriber's* Septuagint, he concluded that they were wrong, and required amendment.

But the most fruitful source of designed alterations was the removal of marginal annotations into the text. Indeed to this cause may be ascribed the alterations from parallel passages, whenever those parallel passages had been written in the margin. Other marginal notes consisted of explanations, or applications of the adjacent text, and when a manuscript, with such notes, fell into the hands of a transcriber, he either supposed, that they were parts of the text, accidentally omitted; and supplied in the margin, or considered them as useful additions, which there would be no harm in adopting. In either case he took them into the text of that manuscript, which he himself was writing.

The latter case may indeed be referred to that class of various readings, which derive their origin from wilful corruption, being introduced for the sole purpose of obtaining support to some particular doctrine. That such things *have* been done, and done by all parties, is not to be denied: for we have examples on record. But as we have received our manuscripts of the Greek Testament, not out of the hands of the ancient heretics, but from the orthodox members of the Greek church, we have less reason to apprehend, that they have suffered, in points of doctrine, from heretical influence."

False readings are of four kinds,—Omissions, Additions, Transpositions, and Alterations; and each of these may be of Letters, of Words, or of Clauses. 1. Omissions easily happen through carelessness, but sometimes they have been made by design: They tend to alter, pervert, or destroy the sense, which will be restored by supplying them. Omissions of entire words are very frequent; Lowth says there are *fifty* such Omissions in Isaiah: They always introduce obscurity, absurdity, or a different sense. Sometimes omissions of whole clauses have happened, which in a variety of ways, mutilate or vitiate the import of the sacred scriptures. 2. Additions and Interpolations have arisen from a variety of causes particularly from taking marginal glosses into the text; which disturb or destroy the sense. 3. Transpositions of letters and words have frequently occurred, which produce unintelligibility and confusion. There are also transpositions of whole clauses, sentences, or even chapters, which occasion various difficulties. 4. Lastly, there are many false readings which consist in change or alterations of letters, words, and sentences, which do not fail to produce alterations in the sense.

MANUSCRIPTS.

The autographs, or manuscripts of the New Testament, which were written either by the apostles themselves, or by amanuenses under their immediate inspection, have long since perished; and we have no information whatever concerning their history. The pretended autograph of Mark's Gospel at Venice, is now known to be nothing more than a copy of the Latin version, and no ex-

isting manuscripts of the New Testament can be traced higher than the fourth century; and most of them are of still later date. Some contain the whole of the New Testament; others comprise particular books or fragments of books; and there are several which contain not whole books arranged according to their usual order, but detached portions or lessons appointed to be read on certain days in the public service of the Christian church; from which again whole books have been put together. These are called *Lectionaria*, and are of two sorts: 1. *Evangelisteria*, containing lessons from the four Gospels; and, 2. *Apostoli*, comprising lessons from the Acts and Epistles, and sometimes only the Epistles themselves. When a manuscript contains both parts, Michaelis says that it is called *Apostolo Evangelion*. Forty six Evangelisteria were collated by Griesbach for the four Gospels of his edition of the New Testament; and seven Lectionaria or Apostoli, for the Acts and Epistles.

The oldest Greek Manuscripts were usually written on Vellum in capital or *Uncial* letters till the seventh century, mostly without any division of words. Some copies have purple coloured Vellum, and are ornamented. The MSS. on paper are of later date: Those on cotton paper are posterior to the ninth, and those on linen are subsequent to the twelfth century. The use of the capital letters appears to have prevailed till the eighth century; but since the tenth century the Greek manuscripts are written in small letters. The most ancient MSS. are written without any accents, spirits, stops, or separation of words; nor was it till after the ninth century that the Copyists began to leave spaces between the words.*

* Although there are some full points used in the Alexandrine, Vatican, and Cambridge MSS. yet it cannot be shown that our present system of punctuation was generally adopted, sooner than the ninth century. Ernesti observes from Cyril of Jerusalem, that the punctuation of the Septuagint (and consequently of the New Testament) was unknown in the early part of the fourth century. Jerome began to add the *comma* and *colon*, which were afterwards inserted in many ancient MSS. In the ancient MSS. of the New Testament the several books were written in one continued series, without any blank space, so that a whole book seemed only one word: and the numerous mistakes of the Fathers, prove that they had no system of punctuation in the fourth century. Indeed the accents, points, and aspirates of the New Testament appear to be an imitation of the Jewish Masorites.

The most ancient divisions of the New Testament were the *Titles* of Tatian and the *Sections* of Ammonius, who made these divisions for the convenience of arranging their *Harmonies* of the Gospels. The first who divided the Latin Bible into chapters and Verses was Hugo Cardinalis, who composed the first Latin Concordance about the middle of the thirteenth century. A similar division was first made of the Hebrew Bible by Rabbi Nathan, who composed the first Hebrew Concordance about the middle of the fifteenth century; and the last improvement of the Verses, was made by Athias, a Jew of Amsterdam, in his beautiful edition of the Hebrew Bible printed in 1661. The verses into which the New Testament is now divided, were invented, in

The total number of Manuscripts that have been collated for the New Testament amounts to nearly five hundred, but very few manuscripts contain the whole either of the Old or New Testament. The greater part have only the Four Gospels, because they were most frequently read in the Churches; others contain only the Acts of the Apostles and the Catholic Epistles; others again, have the Acts and Paul's Epistles; and a very few contain the Apocalypse or Revelation.

The Manuscripts written in Uncial or Capital letters, are designated in Griesbach's Prolegomena, by the Roman Capitals from A to X: those written in small letters are distinguished by numerals from 1 to 236. The Evangelistaria are indicated by figures from 1—46. The books used by Matthaei are designated by the small letters of the Roman and Grecian alphabets, and figures from 1—20: amounting in all, to 355 Greek Manuscripts. The reader is referred to the second volume of Marsn's edition of Michaelis' Introduction, where he will find a catalogue of 470 Manuscripts, which have been collated for the New Testament.

The Manuscripts written in Uncial letters are preferred to others: of those A. B. C. D. and L. are the most valuable. The MSS. designated by I. N. O. P. Q. R. T. consist only of a few fragments; and cannot, therefore, be estimated of much importance. Those MSS. denoted by figures from 1—236. and also those of Mathaei, being all written after the tenth. and most of them from the eleventh to the sixteenth century cannot be adduced as strong evidence of a primitive reading. The testimony of the MSS. A. B. C. D. L. and the Ancient Versions are the main pillars of the Evangelical Scriptures.

A. the Alexandrine Manuscript, written about the end of the fourth century, contains the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament which has been edited by Grabe, and the New Testament, a fac simile of which was published by Dr. Woide in 1786. It was sent by Cyril Lucaris, Patriarch of Constantinople, who brought it from Alexandria, as a present to Charles I. and is preserved in the British Museum. This MS. is of great and deserved estimation: it agrees to a remarkable extent with the Syriac, Coptic, and Ethiopic Versions; and is equally remarkable for its agreement with the *Byzantine* class of MSS. in the Gospels; with the *Alexandrine*, in the Epistles of Paul; and with the *Western*, in the Acts and Catholic Epistles.

B. The Vatican Manuscript preserved at Rome containing the Greek Version of the Septuagint and the New Testament. This MS. contests the palm of antiquity with the Alexandrine, and and yields to none in real value. Michaelis prefers it to the Alexandrine. There is a remarkable co-incidence between this MS. and D. and L. It is written on parchment, in capitals, without

imitation of Rabbi Nathan, by Robert Stephens for his Greek Concordance, and introduced into his edition of the Greek Testament in the year 1551.

any division of chapters, verses, or words: and is as old as the end of the fourth century. Neither the Alexandrine nor the Vatican has the asterisks of Origen in the Septuagint, which Kennicott considers a proof that they were not taken from the Hexapla. The Alexandrine is said to approach the nearer to Origen, the Vatican to the Greek Text before the time of Origen.

C. The Ephrem Manuscript, kept in the Royal Library at Paris, a *Codex Rescriptus*, written on Vellum in large Uncial letters without accents or division of words. The first part contains several Greek works by Ephrem, the Syrian, under which was originally written the whole of the Greek Bible, of which many traces are still visible. Professor Hug considers it older than the Alexandrine, Wetstein assigns it to the beginning of the sixth century and Marsh to the seventh. It shows itself to be of Egyptian origin as it exhibits the Alexandrine Recension in its greatest purity, and favors the Latin Version. It is defective in many places, in the four Gospels as may be seen in Griesbach.

D. The *Codex Bezae* or *Cantabrigiensis*, the famous Cambridge MS. used by Beza in his edition of the New Testament, and presented by him to the University of Cambridge in 1581. It contains the four Gospels and the Acts written on Vellum without accents, marks of aspiration, or spaces between the words. Wetstein and Marsh suppose it to belong to the fifth century, but Dr. Kipling, the editor of the Fac Simile, thinks it much older than the Alexandrine and that it must have been written so early as the second century. It contains, besides the Greek, the Old Italic or Latin Version, and is a most invaluable MS. Sixty-six leaves of this MS. are much torn or mutilated; but the splendid and correct fac simile of Kipling, will render any additional wear by collation unnecessary, for the only difference Porson himself could find, was one letter in the margin. Some have imagined this MS. corrupted from the Latin, but Semler, Michaelis, Griesbach and Marsh have amply refuted the charge.

D. In Paul's Epistles signifies the famous *Codex Claromontanus*. This MS. is a perfect continuation of the Cambridge MS. containing the Greek text and Old Italic Version, of Paul's Epistles. It was found in the Monastery of Clermont, diocese of Bauvais, and used by Beza together with the Cambridge MS. in preparing his edition of the New Testament. This MS. is also written on Vellum in large Uncial letters, but accents and aspirates have been added by a later hand. Its age is fixed to the sixth or seventh century. Dr. Edward Harwood of Bristol, England, has followed these MSS. in his critical edition of the New Testament. The Cambridge and Clermont MSS. were considered by him, the nearest to the text of the sacred originals of any MSS. now known to the world.

L. The Royal MS. 62. in the Paris Library used by Stephens for his edition of the Greek Testament, in 1550. It was written

in the eighth or ninth century, and judged by Michaelis to be one of the most valuable MSS. that has been collated. Griesbach believes this MS. was transcribed from another very ancient one, which had no accents, because the accents are often wanted, and frequently wrong placed when they are inserted. This MS. harmonizes with the Alexandrine or Western edition; and contains the four Gospels, written in Uncial letters of an oblong form. There are in it references to the Ammonian sections and the Canons of Eusebius.

CLASSIFICATION OF MANUSCRIPTS.

The Basis of Griesbach's system is the division of the Greek Manuscripts of the New Testament into three classes called *Recensions*, each of which is considered an independent witness for the reading it contains. Hence the value of a Reading is estimated not according to the individual MS. or the number of MSS. in which it is found but according to the classes by which it is supported. Formerly authorities were rather numbered than weighed; so that if a reading were contained in thirty MSS. out of fifty, the scale was supposed to turn in its favor. Nor was due attention paid to that necessary distinction between the antiquity of a MS. and the antiquity of its text. Wetstein in his *Animadversions* annexed to his Greek Testament went a great way towards the reduction of sacred Criticism to a regular system: but we are principally indebted to Semler who laid the foundation, and to Griesbach, who raised the superstructure.

From a comparison and combination of the readings exhibited by Wetstein it was discovered that certain *characteristic* readings distinguished certain MSS. Fathers, and Versions; others a *second* class; and others again a *third* class of MSS. Versions, and Fathers. It was also discovered that this three-fold classification had additional support from the places where the MSS. were written, the Fathers lived, and the Versions were made. Hence arose *three* different classes which received the names of the *Alexandrine*, the *Byzantine*, and the *Western Recensions* *

1. The Alexandrine Recension or edition including the Alexandrine Manuscript of Paul's Epistles, the Vatican MS. the Ephrem, the Royal MS. of Stephens, and those MSS. denoted in

*Whatever causes, unknown to us, may have operated in producing the effect, there is no doubt that those characteristic readings are really contained in the manuscripts, fathers, and versions, and that the classification, which is founded on them, is founded on truth. Hence arises a new criterion of authenticity. A majority of individual manuscripts can no longer be considered, either as decisive, or very important on this subject. A majority of the Recensions, or Editions, is alone to be regarded, as far as number is concerned. The testimony of the individual manuscripts is applied to ascertain what is the reading of this or that Edition: but the question of fact being once determined, it ceases to be of consequence what number of manuscripts may be produced, either of the first, or of the second, or of the third of those Editions.

Griesbach's catalogue by the numerals 22, 33, 102, likewise the Sahidic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian and Philoxenian Versions; also the quotations of Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Ammonius, Cyril of Alexandria, Didymus, Nonnus, Isidore and Theodore of Pelusium.

2. The Western Recension, including the Latin Versions, and the Latin Fathers after the time of Tertullian in Africa, Italy, and France; also the Cambridge MS. the Alexandrine in the Acts and Catholic Epistles, several of the Royal MSS. at Paris, and some of the Vatican at Rome.

3. The Byzantine text is found in the four Gospels of the Alexandrine MS. the Slavonic or Russian Version, and the vulgate or common printed editions of the Greek Testament: also the citations of Chrysostom, Theophylac and other writers who flourished in Greece and Asia Minor in the fifth and sixth centuries. The MSS. of Mount Athos are referred to this edition by Michaelis, and all the citations of those writers who were subject to the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Most of the Manuscripts now extant exhibit one of the texts above described; some are composed of two or three recensions. No individual manuscript preserves any recension in a pure state; but manuscripts are said to be of the Alexandrian or Western recension, as the appropriate readings of each preponderate. The margins of these manuscripts, as well as those of the Ethiopic, Armenian, Sahidic, and Syro-Philoxenian versions, and the Syriac version of Jerusalem, contain the Alexandrian variations for the Western readings, or vice versa; and some Byzantine manuscripts have the Alexandrian or Western various lections in their margins.

Each of these recensions has characteristics peculiar to itself. The Occidental or Western preserves harsh readings, Hebraisms and solecisms, which the Alexandrine has exchanged for readings more conformable to classic usage. The Western is characterised by readings calculated to relieve the text from difficulties, and to clear the sense: it frequently adds supplements to the passages adduced from the Old Testament: and omits words that appear to be either repugnant to the context or to other passages, or to render the meaning obscure. The Alexandrine is free from the interpretations and transpositions of the Western recension. An explanatory reading is therefore suspicious in the Western recension, and a classical one in the Alexandrine. The Byzantine or Constantinopolitan recension (according to Griesbach's system) preserves the Greek idiom still purer than the Alexandrine, and resembles the Western in its use of copious and explanatory readings. It is likewise mixed, throughout, with the readings of the other recensions.—Such are the *outlines* of that system, which Griesbach has applied to the criticism of the Greek Testament.

THE VERSIONS.

The versions are translations of the scriptures, from the original into other languages. All versions before the art of printing must have been made from some MSS. and consequently could only be a transcript of such MSS. as were used by the translators. But, as the MSS. differed among themselves, so the versions made from them, must differ also, according to the MSS. from which they were taken. Hence, both MSS. and versions contain various readings; but the most ancient MSS. and versions, and the most carefully written, will approximate the nearest to the original Autographs.—But as all the versions of different countries differ in their readings, it is evident they have been formed from different MSS. Some of the versions are of much greater antiquity than the oldest MSS. we now possess; and are therefore inestimably valuable, seeing they tend to show us the state of the MSS. at the time they were written. The principal ancient versions are the Greek, Syriac, Latin, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Armenian, Arabic, Gothic, and Slavonic.

THE GREEK VERSIONS.

The Septuagint is a version of the Old Testament, made into Greek before the time of Christ; and is introduced here because not only of its peculiar dialect which greatly tends to illustrate the language of the New Testament, but also because it was used by our Lord and his Apostles, as the text-book of the Holy Scriptures: for whenever Christ or his disciples refer to the Old Testament, they invariably cite the words of the Septuagint.

The Septuagint is so called from the Jewish account of seventy-two persons having been employed in making this famous translation, or from its having received the approbation of the Jewish Sanhedrin which consisted of seventy-two Elders. This is the most valuable and ancient Version of the Old Testament and was held in so much esteem both by Jews and Christians as to be constantly read both in synagogues and Churches. Dr. Clarke* observes that "even in Jerusalem in the apostolic age, the Septuagint Version was quoted in preference to the Hebrew text. God was thereby preparing the way of the Gospel by bringing this version into general credit, which was to be the means of conveying the truths of Christianity to the whole Gentile world. How precious should this august and most important version be to every Christian and especially to every Christian Minister. A Version without which no man ever did or ever can critically understand the New Testament. Without the assistance afforded by this version there never could have been a correct translation of the Hebrew text, since that language ceased to be vernacular. Without it even Jerome could have done little in translating the Old Testament into Latin; and most biblical scholars know how much all the

* Commentary on Acts xv. 17.

modern versions of the Old Testament owe to Jerome's Vulgate."

Since such are really the claims of the Septuagint, an unusual prolixity may be permitted in this particular notice of the Greek Bible. The history of this version is involved in some obscurity. Some say Ptolemy Philadelphius king of Egypt caused this version to be made for the use of the Alexandrine Library which he had founded, and for this purpose he sent Aristeas and Andreas, two distinguished officers of his court to Eleazar the High Priest, to request of the latter a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures and persons who were equally skilled in the Hebrew and Greek languages to translate them. Accordingly seventy-two men (six chosen of each tribe) were sent to Ptolemy, who shut them up in the Island of Pharos till the version was accomplished. This relation is derived from an account ascribed to Aristeas and passed without remonstrance for the long period of two thousand years.

The veracity of Aristeas's narrative has been violently attacked by Scaliger, Prideaux, and Hody, and ably vindicated by Walton. Vossius, Whiston, and Brett. Philo, an early Jewish writer states that Ptolemy Philadelphus sent to Palestine for some learned Jews, each of whom executed a version of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Island of Pharos, which so exactly and uniformly agreed in words, phrases, and sense, as proved the writers to be no common interpreters. He adds that an annual festival was celebrated by the Alexandrian Jews, in the Island of Pharos, where the version was made till his time, to perpetuate its memory and to thank God for so great a benefit. Justin Martyr and Epiphanius both relate accounts of the 72 Interpreters being shut up in cells, and making versions so exact, as surprised the king, who loaded the translators with wealth and honors. Justin asserts the remains of the cells were visible in his time.

The five books of Moses are generally believed to be much better translated than the other parts of the Septuagint, though Michaelis is of opinion that of all the books of the Septuagint, the style and *translation* of the Proverbs is the best; the translators having clothed the most ingenious thoughts in as neat and elegant language, as was ever used by a Pythagorian sage, to express his philosophical maxims. Probably the Pentateuch alone was the work of the seventy, performed about 285 years before Christ: and this is more probable from the consideration that the Jews did not begin to read the other books in their synagogues, till about the year 170 before Christ, when Antiochus Epiphanes prohibited the reading of the law. From the very close resemblance of the text of the Septuagint to that of the Samaritan Pentateuch, some eminent critics have believed the former to have been translated from the latter; but the great accuracy and antiquity of both may account for their agreement; and the veneration of the Jews for the law, may have been the cause of more labor being bestowed on the Pentateuch, than on other parts of their scriptures. The oth-

er books may have been translated by different persons at different times and the whole version finished 150 years before Christ.

It is certainly manifest from the frequent quotations made by Christ and his Apostles, that a Greek version of the Old Testament was in general use and esteem at the commencement of the Christian dispensation: and the references of our Lord and his Apostles, to the Septuagint, whenever they cite the Old Testament, has stamped indelible honor on the Greek version. Indeed it must stand as the first and unrivalled copy of the sacred Scriptures: for being made at a very early period, the MSS. of the Hebrew text, must have been in a much higher state of purity, than they could have been, many centuries afterwards. Moreover, where it differs from the Hebrew, it generally preserves what we have reason to prefer, as the ancient and genuine readings: for even where the translators did not understand their author, they commonly show what they found in his text, by the verbal closeness of their imitation.* The Septuagint is a most valuable key to the Scriptures of the Old Testament; and its general accuracy greatly facilitates the acquisition of the Hebrew tongue. Nor is it valuable, only as an illustration of the Old Testament; for it also contributes to illustrate the New, whose penmen writing in the same language, referring to the Original, and using the same style with the 70 translators, often quoted their version, which they evidently held in great esteem, and with which they were intimately acquainted. Hence it necessarily follows that the one class of writings, should throw the clearest and strongest light on the other.

The Septuagint version, though originally made for the Jews who spoke the Greek, and therefore called Hellenists, in the Gospel of John and Acts of the Apostles, was the only copy of the Scriptures known or valued by the Greeks. It was the text commented by Chrysostom and Theodoret; it was this which furnished topics to Athanasius, Nazianzen, and Basil; and from this fountain the stream was derived to the Latin Church, first by the Italic version which was made from the Septuagint, and secondly by the study of the Greek Fathers. It was by this borrowed light that the Latin Fathers illuminated the Western hemisphere: and when the age of Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory successively passed away, this was the light put into the hands of the next dynasty of theologists, the schoolmen, who managed their theological disquisitions by the aid of this luminary alone. So that whether in Greek or Latin, it was still the Septuagint that was read, explained, and quoted as authority, for a period of fifteen hundred years.

There are generally reckoned four independent Editions of the Septuagint; the *Complutensian*, in which variations were made in conformity to the Hebrew;—The Aldine, the Vatican, and Grabe's edition published chiefly from the Alexandrine MS. These editions differ considerably from one another, and therefore leave

room for the judicious critic to improve on them all.—The best and most convenient editions of the Septuagint are those of Bos, Breitinger, Reineccius, and Holmes; and the best Lexicographer for the Septuagint, as well as for the New Testament is Schleusner.

We cannot dismiss this notice of the Septuagint without a brief historical description of some of its earliest editions or sister versions, made in the second, third, and fourth centuries: especially those which gave rise to the labors of Origen, as also those which were subsequently derived from that immense work.

ORIGEN'S HEXAPLA.

The first writer, who appears to have paid attention to the Criticism of the Bible, is the celebrated Origen, who was born in Egypt toward the end of the second century, and died at Tyre soon after the middle of the third. His criticism was directed to the emendation of the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. Origen himself relates in his Commentary on St. Matthew, that in the manuscripts of the Septuagint, which was become the Bible of the Greek Christians, such alterations had been made, either by design, or through carelessness of transcribers, as to make the manuscripts materially differ from each other, and of course, even if no other cause prevailed, from the Hebrew Bible. Of this difference the Jews availed themselves in their controversies with the Christians, who, with a few exceptions, were ignorant of Hebrew, while the Jews, especially since the establishment of the school at Tiberias in Gallilee, had begun again to cultivate the original language of the Old Testament. This knowledge enabled them, in their controversies with the Christians, to detect the difference between the Hebrew and the Greek Bible: and, as it frequently happened, that the passages quoted by the Christians against the Jews, were either not contained at all in the Hebrew, or contained there in a different shape, the arguments, which were founded on such quotations, fell immediately to the ground. It was sufficient to reply, "the words, which you quote, are not in the original." It is true, that an *original* may be corrupted as well as a *translation*: and that the Jews were guilty of such corruptions, has been asserted both in ancient and in modern times. But when we consider the rules, which were observed by the Jews in transcribing the sacred writings, rules which were carried to an accuracy that bordered on superstition, there is reason to believe, that no work of antiquity has descended to the present age so free from alteration, as the Hebrew Bible. Nor does Origen appear to have suspected, that the differences between the Hebrew and the Greek arose from any other cause, than alterations in the latter.

He made therefore the Hebrew text the basis of those corrections, which he proposed to introduce in the Septuagint. For this purpose he formed a kind of Polyglot, which was not only a work of immense labour, but has served as a model, even to the signs

or marks of criticism, for later editors. It contained the whole of the Old Testament, divided into columns, like our modern Polyglot Bibles. The first column was occupied bythe Hebrew. But, as very few of those persons, to whose immediate benefit his labours were directed, were acquainted even with the letters of that language, he added, in a second column, the Hebrew words in Greek letters, that his readers might have at least some notion of the form and sound of the Hebrew words. To express their meaning, he added, in a third column. a Greek translation from the Hebrew, which had been lately made by a Jew, of the name of Aquila, and which adheres so closely to the original, as frequently to violate the common rules of Greek construction. The fourth column was occupied by another Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. likewise lately made, but probably after the translation of Aquila. The author of this second Greek translation was Symmachus, whose object was to give, not so much a *literal* translation of the Hebrew, as a translation expressive of the sense, and free as possible from Hebraisms.

Having thus prepared the way for his proposed emendation of the Septuagint, Origen placed in the fifth column the amended text of the Septuagint; and in the sixth column another Greek translation, which had been lately made by Theodotion.

In this revision of the Septuagint, the first part of Origen's labour was to collate it throughout with the Hebrew; and wherever he found any word or words in the former, to which their was nothing correspondent in the latter, such word or words he did not expunge from the Septuagint, but he inclosed them within certain marks expressive of their absence from the Hebrew, namely with an obelus, or mark of *minus* prefixed, and a crotchet at the end to express how far the obelus or mark of *minus* was meant to extend. On the other hand, where the Hebrew had any word or words, to which there was nothing correspondent in the Septuagint, there he inserted such word or words, as were necessary to supply the deficiency. And, that the reader might always know where such insertions were made, he prefixed to them an asterisk, or mark of *plus*, again denoting by a crotchet at the end, what words the asterisk was meant to include. And, as the version of Theodotion held a middle rank between the closeness of Aquila and the freedom of Symmachus, the additions in question were chiefly made in the words which were used by Theodotion.* For this preference

*Aquila was a native of Sinope in Pontus, who flourished in the beginning of the second century, and made his version of the Hebrew Text about the year 130. His translation was so extremely close and servile, that Jerome says it was a good dictionary of the Hebrew words. Theodotion was a native of Ephesus, who also made a version about the year 150; for the versions of Aquila and Theodotion are both referred to by Justin, in his dialogue with Trypho, about 160. As Theodotion made use of both the Septuagint and Aquila's version—following sometimes the diction of the one and sometimes that of the other, and often mixing them both together, his style was more

there was also another reason, namely, that the style of Theodotion more nearly resembled the style of the Septuagint, than either of the other translations, and therefore was better adapted to the purpose, to which Origen applied it. Hence also the translation of Theodotion very properly occupied the column adjacent to the corrected version of the Septuagint. In some instances, either where Theodotion's translation was defective, or for other reasons at present unknown, Origen used the words of Aquila or Symmachus. But in all cases he expressed by the initials, the translations from which he copied. These were the sources, from which Origen drew in every part of the Old Testament. But in some books he used two other Greek translations, of which the authors are unknown: and in certain passages even a seventh Greek version, of which the author is likewise unknown.

The name, which is commonly given to this work of Origen, is Biblia Hexapla, or Bible in six columns, which it contained throughout, namely, the Hebrew, the Hebrew in Greek characters, the version of Aquila, the version of Symmachus, the Septuagint version, and that of Theodotion. In these books, which contained likewise two anonymous versions, and filled therefore eight columns, it was called Biblia Octapla: and in the passages, where the third anonymous version occupied a ninth column, it received the name of Enneapla. On the other hand, as out of six columns, which went through the whole work, only four were occupied with Greek translations, the same work, which most writers call Hexapla, has by others been denominated Tetrapla. They are only different names of the same work, viewed in different lights, though some authors have fallen into the mistake of supposing, from the difference in the names, that they denoted different works.

The labour, which was necessary for a work of such magnitude, can be estimated only by those, who have been engaged in similar undertakings. Eight and twenty years are said to have been employed in making preparations for it, independently of the time, which was employed in the writing of it. It was begun at Cæsarea, and probably finished at Tyre. The text of the Septuagint, as settled by Origen, is called the Hexaplarian text, to distinguish it from the text of the Septuagint, as it existed before the time of Origen.

Of the labors of Origen, in amending the text of the Septua-

near that of the Septuagint, and was therefore generally followed by Origen, when he altered any thing in the Septuagint Column of the Hexapla. The version of Symmachus, made about the year 200, is much more free and paraphrastic than the others. He appears to have been better acquainted with the laws of interpretation, than his predecessors; and has endeavored to render the Hebrew idioms with Grecian precision. He often borrowed from the three other versions, but closely and faithfully followed the Hebrew Original. As the above translators were Ebionites, or Jewish Christians, they have been suspected for following the Jewish mode of interpretation, but the charge has not been substantiated.

gint, Montfaucon, the editor of the "*Hexaplorum Origenis quae supersunt*," or "Remains of Origen's Hexapla," has given a full account in the preface. It was Origen's design to render the Bible of the Christians in all respects the same with the Bible of the Jews, that in future controversies there might be a common standart, to which both parties might appeal. The work, in its entire state, has long ceased to exist; and we are indebted, for our knowledge of it, to Eusebius and Jerome, both of whom consulted it in the public library at Cesarea, to which it had been removed from Tyre, after the death of Origen, by Pamphilus the founder of the Library, where it perished in the flames, on the irruption of the Saracens.

In the beginning of the fourth century, Eusebius and Pamphilus made a new edition of the text of the Septuagint from the Hexapla, retaining Origen's critical marks, and inserting some occasional extracts from other versions. This edition was received by all the churches of Palestine, and deposited in almost every library. About the same time, Lucian a Presbyter of Antioch, undertook an addition of the vulgar Greek text, revised from the Hebrew Original, which by the command of Constantine, the Great, was read in all the churches from Antioch to Constantinople. Nearly co-temporary with these editions, was that of Hesychius, an Egyptian Bishop, which prevailed in Egypt and became, according to Jerome, the Alexandrine *exemplar*. Though all these editions were more or less dependent on Origen's Hexaplarian edition, they all differed among themselves. By frequent transcription, the marks of Origen's insertions, became so changed as to be of little use, and were therefore finally omitted. The MSS. of Vulgate or Ante-Hexaplarian Septuagint soon fell into disuse; and all the MSS. of this venerable and excellent version, now in existence, are derived from the editions of Eusebius, Lucian, and Hesychius. So much for the Septuagint, the Queen of versions, and the Hexapla of Origen, the first exemplar of Polyglotts.

SYRIAC VERSION.

The Syriac Version is the most valuable of all the translations of the New Testament in existence. The learned and critical Wakefield says, this inestimable version would be ill-exchanged for all the manuscripts of the Greek Testament in the universe: and Michaelis pronounces it the best translation of the New Testament for ease, elegance, and fidelity. This must be understood of the Ancient Syriac, called *Peschito*, which contains the books of the New Testament denominated *Homologomena*, or *acknowledged*: these are *the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul, the Epistle of James, the first of John and the first of Peter.* The second epistle of Peter, the second, and third of John, the epistle of Jude, and the Revelation are wanted in all genuine copies of the Syriac Version.

The Christian religion was first published in Syria, which included Judea, Samaria, and Phenicia. The language of our Lord and his disciples, as well as of myriads of the first Christians was Syriac: and as the Syrian Churches flourished most towards the end of the first and beginning of the second century, the Christians having a temple at Edessa erected after the model of that at Jerusalem, it is generally believed, they had this ancient version both of the Old and New Testament, made for their use. The books of the Old Testament are translated from the Hebrew and those of the New from the original Greek. The great uniformity between this version and the Septuagint of the Old Testament, and also the Old Italic in the New, has induced some critics to imagine, that the Ancient Syriac Version was taken from the Septuagint and Italic: but the agreement only proves that the MSS. used for these versions agreed; and therefore their occurrence gives great authority to those readings which have obtained their united suffrage. The version of the Old Testament is evidently made from the Hebrew, to which it closely adheres. Dathe considers the Syriac version as a certain standard by which we may judge of the state of the Hebrew text in the second century. Walton, Carpzov, Leusden, Lowth, and Kennicott fix its date to the first century. Michaelis, to the end of the first or beginning of the second century, and Jahn ascribes it at the latest to the second. To its general fidelity almost every critic of note bears unqalified approbation.

To the same date we assign that part of the version containing the New Testament. The Syriac was the prevailing dialect of Gallilee, and in that dialect to which our Lord and his disciples were accustomed, Matthew wrote his Gospel: and the most satisfactory reason that can be assigned for the obscurity of antiquity concerning the fate of Matthew's Hebrew original, is that it approached the Syriac version so much, as to be either adopted or to fall into disuse after that version was made. Postell says all the Syrian Christians agree in a tradition, that Mark made this translation of the New Testament into his own language: But Alsted and Maritini say it ought to be ascribed to the first Christians at Antioch. Justin Martyr, who (as he tells us in his second apology) was a native of Neapolis in Samaria, assures us that the writings of the Prophets and Apostles were read every Sabbath in the Christian assemblies. Now according to this testimony of Justin, the Syrians must have had a version of both the Old and New Testament about the commencement of the second century.

The Internal evidence of its antiquity is equally striking. It wants the disputed epistles which is evidence either that it was made before these epistles were written, or before they were admitted as scripture. It also wants the history of the adulteress,* found in the Cambridge MS. which is probably the oldest in ex-

* John viii. 1—11.

istence, though it often agrees with the Syriac where it differs from all others. It also wants the famous testimony of the three heavenly witnesses.*

This version was first made known in Europe by Moses of Mardin, who was sent by Ignatius, Patriarch of the Maronite Christians, in 1552, to procure an impression of the Syriac New Testament, which was executed at Vienna in 1555, under the editorial care of Moses, Widmanstad, and Postell; and at the expense of the Emperor Ferdinand I. The first edition of that part containing the Old Testament was that which appeared in the Paris Polyglott, and was afterward reprinted in Walton's. Schaaf's edition of the New Testament is good, and has an excellent Syriac Lexicon.

The Philoxenian is another syriac version of the New Testament, but greatly inferior to the Peschito, in elegance and accuracy, notwithstanding it is of great value in showing the readings of the manuscripts from which it was made in the year 508, and also of those with which it was afterwards collated. It is called the Philoxenian version, from Philoxenus, bishop of Hierapolis, under whose auspices it was made by Polycarp, his rural bishop. It was undertaken at the beginning of the sixth century, from motives at present unknown, though not improbably from a desire of having a translation of the New Testament, which should approach to the original even more closely, than the old or common version. For the Philoxenian version adheres to it, even with servility. An ancient version, except in places where that version has been altered, is regarded as the representative of the Hebrew or Greek manuscript, from which that version was taken; consequently, the more closely such MS. is represented, the more accurately shall we know its readings, and hence the more precisely shall we be enabled to judge, when the authenticity of readings is disputed.

To render this close translation still more conformable with the original, it was callated with Greek manuscripts in Egypt, at the beginning of the seventh century. The person who undertook this collation was Thomas. bishop of Germanicia; and he not only corrected the Syriac text from those manuscripts, where he thought that correction was necessary, but at other times he noted their various readings in the margin. As these various readings were taken from manuscripts of the Greek Testament, which were probably much older, than the oldest now extant, they are of course important to sacred criticism. A copy of this revision or edition of the Philoxenian version, with the Greek readings in the margin, is now in the Bodleian Library; and it has been printed by Dr. White, the Hebrew Professor at Oxford, with short, but very useful notes.†

* 1 John v. 7.

† There is a Syriac translation of Origen's Hexaplar edition of the Septuagint: specimens of which have been published by De Rossi, at Parma, Norberg, at London, and Bugati, at Milan. This version contains the Hagiography

LATIN VULGATE.

Christianity made its appearance in the world at a period when the Roman Empire became universal, and the Latin language, gradually supplanting the Greek, became nearly as triumphant as the Roman eagles. Augustine testifies that at a very early period, the Latin Church possessed a great number of versions made from the original scriptures, by authors unknown; for as soon as any one found a Greek copy and thought himself sufficiently skilled in both languages, he made a translation of it into the Latin. One of these translations seems to have acquired an extensive circulation, and became preferred on account of its clearnes and fidelity. Augustine calls it the *Itala*, undoubtedly because made in Italy, but some critics think the word is not a proper name, but a perversion of the pronoun *illa*, and that Augustine meant to say "Among the translations, *those* are preferred which are most literal and perspicuous;" but such torturing of phrases is hypercritical and trifling.

The Old Italic version contained the whole of the Old and New Testament from the Greek made in the close of the first century, and is cited by Tertullian in the second. A considerable part of this version still remains in the Boernerian, Cambridge, and Clermont MSS. and might be collected. This version being extremely literal is well adapted to point out the readings of the ancient Greek copies, and by reason of its antiquity, bestows great authority on those readings which it proves to have then existed. But before the end of the fourth century, the alterations either designed or accidental, were become as numerous as the alterations of the Greek Bible before it was corrected by Origen: and as there was none better qualified than Jerome, a Monk of Palestine and the best Hebrician of all the Fathers, he was commissioned to undertake the task by Pope Damasus, who then presided over the See of Rome.

Having revised the Latin version by collating it with the Hexapla of Origen and Greek MSS. of the New Testament, he was unfortunate to commit his MSS. to some person who was enthusiast enough to either secrete or destroy them. But the loss sustained by this treachery served only to stimulate Jerome to fresh exertions. He determined no longer to revise an old translation from the Greek, but to make a new translation of the books of the Old Testament from the Hebrew; and this he accomplished in the year 405. Prejudices against a new translation from the Hebrew

and the latter Prophets, retains the obelus and other marks of Origen; and the subscription at the end, states that it was literally translated from the Greek copy, taken by Eusebius and Pamphilius, from the works of Origen, in the Library of Cesarea. There is also another translation of the New Testament, called Jerusalem Syriac, discovered by Alter in the Vatican library at Rome. It is written in the dialect of Jerusalem; made from the Greek, in Palestine; and remarkably agrees with the Cambridge Manuscrip-

and in favor of the Greek Septuagint, prevented the reception of Jerome's version for nearly two hundred years. At length, however, Pope Gregory the great at the end of the sixth century gave to Jerome's translation the Sanction of Papal authority: and from that time the old translation from the Greek, except the psalms, was abandoned for Jerome's translation from the Hebrew.

In the New Testament, the Latin Vulgate is the old translation corrected by Jerome from MSS. of the Old Italic, collated with the original Greek: so that the Vulgate at present is a mixture of the Old Italic and Jerome's corrections, and shows the state of the original Greek, partly in the *first*, and partly in the *fourth* century. It gives great authority to those readings which it clearly indicates, contains several which are preferable to the present readings of the Greek, and is supported by some of the oldest and best MSS. where the vulgar Greek text has been corrupted.

It must not, however, be inferred that the modern MSS. or printed editions of the vulgate contain either Jerome's translation or Jerome's corrections in the same state in which he left them: for the Latin MSS. were no less exposed to alterations in the middle ages than they were in the early ages of Christianity. Even the two famous editions of the vulgate called the *Sextine* and *Clementine* editions, printed at Rome in 1590 and 1592, both under the sanction of papal authority, and both pronounced authentic, differ materially from each other not only in words but also in sense, affording this useful lesson, that nothing but *sacred criticism* can preserve the Bible in its pristine purity.

Protestants have been extravagant in their attempts to discredit, the vulgate and the Catholics still more extravagant in their unqualified eulogies. Cardinal Ximenes, author of the *Complutensian* Polyglott, compares the Latin Vulgate, placed between the Hebrew and Greek columns, to Jesus Christ, who was *crucified between two thieves*!! Let it suffice to say with Mosheim that Jerome's is the best of all the Latin Versions: and he who can carefully and understandingly peruse the Septuagint, Syriac, and Latin versions, in connexion with the sacred originals, need not lament the wreck of ages nor loss of time.

EGYPTIAN VERSIONS.

The Coptic is a very ancient version made for the use of the Coptic Christians, in the language of lower Egypt, which, before the invasion of the Saracens, was a mixture of the Old Egyptian, and the Greek. Some critics believe this version to have been made about the time of the council of Nice, but others with Dr. Wilkins its learned editor, would assign it to the second century. This version contains the Old and New Testaments; and is a translation of the Septuagint, in the Old, and of Greek in the New. Though the readings of this version have a striking affinity to the Latin, yet critics generally agree that it was wholly made from the

Greek: it follows the Septuagint in the peculiarity of its phrases, additions, omissions, and transpositions, and hence proves itself not to be derived from the Hebrew or Latin. Still some have suspected interpolations from the Latin. There is a partial affinity between it and the Armenian Version, and sometimes it agrees with the readings of the Cambridge, but generally with those of the Alexandrine MS. and of Origen, Eusebius, and Cyril. This version is of considerable use in criticism, particularly as it gave rise to the Arabic after this language became established in Egypt.

The Sahidic is another very ancient version, made in the language of Upper Egypt in the second century. In 1799, Dr. Ford published at Oxford a number of fragments of the Sahidic, amounting to about one third of the New Testament, which had been prepared for the press by Dr. Woide as an appendix to his fac-simile of the Alexandrine MS. A manuscript of the Sahidic was brought from Egypt by the celebrated traveller Dr. Bruce. Woide believed a version of the whole Bible was made into the Sahidic in the beginning of the second century, and by him and others it is esteemed as a most invaluable MS. Though both the Egyptian versions were made from the Greek, they seem to be independent, and to contain different readings.

THE ETHIOPIC.

The Ethiopic is another ancient version, made for the use of Abyssinian Christians, probably by Frumentius, in the fourth century. This much is certain, that Frumentius being banished by the emperor Constantius into Egypt, was placed by Athanasius, as Bishop of Acco, then, Axuma, the chief city of Ethiopia. The books of the Old Testament are translated from the Septuagint, those of the New, from the Greek. The version of the Gospels is vastly superior to that of the Epistles. The Apocalypse is added as an appendix. The MS. of the Acts being very imperfect, its chasms were filled by translations from the Vulgate. Its various readings agree with the Alexandrine, many of its peculiar readings are thought to be erroneous, but where it appears to be exact, its antiquity adds considerable authority. It was the first printed of all the ancient versions. The Roman edition of 1548, was reprinted in the London Polyglott.

THE ARMENIAN.

The Armenians have a version of the entire Bible in their language, which is very differently estimated by the learned. This Version is unanimously ascribed to Miesrob, the inventor of the Armenian Alphabet, and to the Patriarch Isaac, about the end of the fourth, or beginning of the fifth century. It was first made from the Syriac; but the New Testament was afterwards translated from the Greek. Michaelis and Gerard say it was altered, in many places, in the thirteenth century, to render it more confor-

mable to the Latin Vulgate. A critical edition of the entire Armenian Bible was published at Venice, in 1806, by Dr. Zohrab, a learned Armenian, who collated sixty-nine MSS. eight of the entire Bible, fifteen of the Psalms, thirty-two of the Gospels, and fourteen of the Acts and Epistles. In this edition Dr. Zohrab expunged the famous text of the *three heavenly witnesses;* it being unsupported by any of the MSS. which he had collated. This version preserves a singular reading in the twenty-seventh chapter of Matthew; "*whom will ye that I release unto you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus called Christ*? Origen gives the same reading, in his thirty-fifth Homily on Matthew.

THE ARABIC VERSIONS.

The Arabic being the refined and universal language of Asia has been honoured with more translations of the Scriptures than any other of the Oriental languages; and it is very probable, some of them have been made from the Greek, some from the Syriac, and others from the Coptic. All the Arabic versions are posterior to the time of Mahomet, and were, therefore, probably not finished sooner than from the eighth to the tenth century; notwithstanding they are valuable as they represent the state of the Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, and Coptic MSS. from which they were taken after the Saracens subdued Syria and Egypt. Moreover as the language is one of the most copious in the world, and a daughter of the Hebrew, it greatly aids in the investigation of the Hebrew words, and in the elucidation of many passages.

There are three principal editions of the Arabic, to which references are made by Griesbach. 1. That printed at Rome in 1591 probably taken from the Greek; 2. that printed in the Paris and London Polyglotts with numerous corrections; 3. that printed by Erpen 1616, taken from two manuscripts, one of the Gospels written in the thirteenth, and the other of the Acts and Epistles written in the fourteenth century; formed immediately from the Greek, but interpolated from the Syriac. But some say from the Greek, in the Gospels, and Syriac, in the Epistles. This edition of Erpen, is considered much more valuable than any other of the Arabic New Testament.

The edition of the Arabic Bible printed at Rome, in 1761, by the congregation De Propaganda Fide, and the Arabic New Testament, printed at London in 1727, by the society for promoting Christian knowledge, are so altered by their editors, the former from the Latin, and the latter from the Greek, as to be of no value to the Biblical Student.

THE GOTHIC.

Of this version there only remain the four gospels, which is generally called the *Codex Argenteus*, because written in silver letters. It was discovered in the abbey of Werden, in Westpha-

lia; and is preserved in the University of Upsal. This MS. is generally believed to be part of the Gothic version, made by Ulphilas, a Cappadocian by birth, but a famous Bishop of the Meso-Goths in the fourth century. Some, however, who have examined the MS. affirm it to be an old Frankish version, made after the middle of the sixth century. It is allowed by all to be extremely literal and well calculated to show the readings of the Greek MSS. from which it was taken. The best edition is that of Dr. Lye, published at Oxford in 1750.

THE SLAVONIC.

The Slavonic or Russian version was made from the Greek, by two brothers, Cyril and Methodius, in the ninth century; and was but little known in criticism till described by the very learned Dobrowsky, a man of unrivalled knowledge in Slavonic literature. This excellent version contains three-fourths of all the readings adopted by Griesbach, in his edition of the Greek Testament: and it is farther said that where the united evidence of ancient MSS. is against any of the common readings, the Slavonic agrees with these MSS. Hence it follows, that this version must have been been faithfully translated from very ancient MSS. and is therefore valuable for the purpose of biblical criticism. In all the editions, prior to the year 1653, the memorable text in first John is omitted. It is so literal, as frequently to preserve the Greek construction, contrary to the genius of the Slavonic language.*

PRINTED EDITIONS.

Having proceeded so far in the history of the Scriptures, particularly of the New Testament, as to give a general view of the manuscripts and those ancient versions which are of importance to the criticism of the Scriptures, I shall now briefly notice the printed editions. In this department of the History we shall follow the very natural and appropriate division of Marsh into two periods. The first commencing with the Erasmian edition and ending with the Elzevir of 1624: the second includes the critical editions which have appeared from that time to the present.

* It was with some reluctance that we admitted the Slavonic among the ancient versions: but the high eulogies of Matthaei, Dobrowsky, and others have tended to raise the reputation of this version. We ought, however, to consider that the Russian Church being a daughter of the Greek Church, the Moscow manuscripts were of course collected from Constantinople, and other parts of the Greek empire. They belong therefore to that particular class, which modern critics have called the *Byzantine* edition, and which cannot be entitled to the *exclusive* privilege of ascertaining what is genuine or spurious. The Greek Fathers who have lived at Alexandria, the Greek manuscripts which accord with their quotations, and those ancient versions which harmonize with both, have *at least* an *equal* claim to our attention. Nor ought we to decide before we have heard the evidence of a *third* class of manuscripts, containing the Greek text accompanied with the ancient Latin version.

HISTORY OF THE RECEIVED TEXT.

That edition of the Greek Testament, which proceeded from the celebrated press of the Elzevirs at Leyden, in 1624, has been called the *Received Text*, because it has been universally received, and scrupulously printed, word for word, during the last two centuries: indeed it has been generally regarded with superstitious veneration as containing the very words and letters of inspiration which nothing less than impiety would dare to alter or change. But now a flood of light having broken forth from the discoveries and labours of the two last centuries, we have fully ascertained that the Received text, in many places exhibits both corruption and fraud which have been canonized by ignorance and superstition.

At the invention of printing, great ignorance prevailed in literature and religion: hence the best helps, had they been at hand, would not likely have been used; and the first editions, being made from only a few late MSS. corrupted by a thousand transcribers, must therefore have been extremely imperfect. That the best helps were not used, and great negligence and superstition manifested in the first editions, will easily appear from the following brief description.

ERASMIAN EDITIONS.

Erasmus was the first who published an edition of the Greek Testament; for though the Complutensian was first printed, it was not published until sometime after that of Erasmus. The circumstances were os follow: After the Complutension edition was wrought off, for the fifth volume, containing the Greek Testament, is dated January 10th, 1514, it remained some time unpublished, waiting for a license from Pope Leo the tenth. Meantime Erasmus being engaged in superintending the publication of Jerome's works at Basle in Switzerland, Froben the Printer, offered him a certain sum if he could prepare an edition of the Greek Testament in a given time, as the profits arising from the sale would much depend on its being issued from the press before the publication of the Complutensian. The application was first made April 17, 1515, and repeated on the 30th of the same month: and yet notwithstanding that Erasmus had sufficient employment at the works of Jerome, on the following February, out came a Greek Testament with a latin version in a parallel column with the Greek, and the whole liberally furnished with a copious collection of annotations! Jocosely speaking of this hasty production, Erasmus says in one of his letters shortly after, I have just escaped from my confinement at Basle, where I have performed the work of six years in eight months!

This *Editio princeps* of the Greek Testament was prepared from only four MSS. the first containing the Gospels is adjudged by Wetstein to the fifteenth century, and consequently entirely new

when employed by Erasmus; the second containing the Acts and Epistles was written, according to Mill, in the thirteenth century; both of these are still preserved at Basle, with the notes and corrections of Erasmus marked in the margin: the third MS. contained only the book of the Revelation. From these three MSS. constituting only one copy of the whole Testament he printed his edition, but not from these unaltered. He had a manuscript of Theophylact containing his commentary on the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, and another MS. of the whole New Testament except the apocalypse. The corrections therefore made on the margins of his three MSS. were partly from his fourth MS. of which he made almost no use, suspecting that it was corrupted from the vulgate; partly from the MS. of Theophylact, who being the last of the Fathers and living in the eleventh century, his works could only pass as a MS. of that age; and partly from hasty, and often erroneous conjecture: for he who feared to use a manuscript, suspected of being interpolated from the Latin, did not scruple, when his other materials failed, to interpolate Greek of his own making from the Latin vulgate. In this edition Dr. Mill discovered about 500 vitiated passages. A second edition followed the first within the space of three years, in which from advice of friends or collation of MSS. he altered the text in four hundred places, but according to Mill, in seventy, for the worse. In a third edition, 1522, Erasmus made some alterations, through regard to popular prejudice, contrary to his own convictions, one of which was the insertion of 1 John v. 7. These three editions were published before the appearance of the Complutensian, which had remained eight years, at Alcala, unpublished, on account of the death of Cardinal Ximenes: but in a fourth edition, 1527, Erasmus corrected the text of the Revelation, where he had only one defective MS. in 90 places from the Complutensian edition, but in only 26 places in all the other books. The fifth and last edition of Erasmus, prin- in 1535, differed from the fourth, according to Dr. Mill, in only four places.

THE COMPLUTENSIAN.

This edition is called the Complutensian from Complutum, now Alcala, in Spain, where it was printed under the patronage of Cardinal Ximenes, who employed some of the most distinguished Hebrew and Greek scholars of that age, & spared neither pains nor expense in procuring materials for this work: and as all editors are disposed to advance the value of their materials, the Complutensian editors boasted of having the most ancient and correct MSS. and especially of some sent to them from Rome, which induced many to believe they had used the famous Vatican; but the examination of Professors Alter and Marsh have satisfied the critics, that no use whatever was made of the Vatican, and that no reading peculiar to that venerable MS. can be found in the Complutensian edi-

tion. For wherever the modern Greek MSS. of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries differ from the ancient MSS. and quotations of the early Greek Fathers, in such characteristic readings the Complutensian Greek Testament almost invariably agrees with the modern, in opposition to the ancient Greek MSS. Whatever zeal therefore, may have been displayed by the Cardinal and the learned men who assisted him, this edition contributed little to the restoration of the Greek text; seeing it was undoubtedly formed from modern MSS. *alone*. To the charge preferred by Wetstein and Semler against the editors of the Complutensian, of having altered the text, in conformity to the Latin Vulgate, Marsh replies, that though in some places they follow the Vulgate, in opposition to all the Greek MSS. yet there are more than two hundred places in the Catholic epistles, in which this edition differs from the Vulgate. When Professor Moldenhawer visited Alcala, in 1784, to examine the MSS. from which the Complutensian had been made, he learned with inexpressible chagrin, that about 35 years before, an illiteral Librarian, who wanted room for some new books, had sold the MSS. to a Rocket-maker!!*

STEPHENS' EDITIONS.

No editions were attended with greater celebrity than those of Robert Stephens, a learned printer at Paris. His first editions were distinguished for elegant neatness, and the third has been considered the chief d'œvre of splendid typography. In the preface of the first edition, in 1546, Stephens says "Having obtained from the Royal library several MSS. which, from their appearance of antiquity, are almost entitled to adoration, I have formed from them this edition, in such a manner, as not to print even a single letter, which is not confirmed by the greater and better par- of them;" and yet this edition is little more than a compilation from the Complutensian and fifth edition of Erasmus. The second edition differed from the first only in 67 places, and 37 of these were found not genuine. But it is of no importance to criticism, what his two first editions were, the third only became the source of future selections.

In 1550 appeared the famous third edition, in folio: in the preface to which Stephens again boasts of having collated his MSS. a second and even a third time; and notwithstanding Griesbach says, this boasting is vain and false; for every man can see with

*The whole Complutensian Bible is properly the first printed Polyglott, consisting of six volumes folio, the first four containing the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin of the Old Testament in three parallel columns, with the Chaldee paraphrase and Latin interpretation at the bottom of the page, and the margins filled with Hebrew and Chaldee radicals. The fifth volume contains the Greek and Latin Testaments, in parallel columns, with a kind of concordance in the margin. The sixth volume contains a Hebrew and Chaldee grammar and dictionary, with numerous useful and explanatory indexes.

his own eyes, that he made almost no use of his MSS. but adopted, as by a blind impulse, whatever he found in the fifth edition of Erasmus, following even the mistakes of that edition against the authority of all his MSS. According also to the testimony of Wetstein, Stephens' third edition differs scarcely twenty times from the fifth of Erasmus, in all the Gospels and Epistles; and when he departs from Erasmus, in the Apocalypse, it is only to follow the Complutensian. Moreover he did not collate any MSS. himself, but trusted entirely to his son Henry, a youth of 18 years, who, in his references to the Complutensian, gives no less than fifty false quotations. The same negligence seems to pervade all the labours of Stephens, his Greek Concordance not excepted; so that this famous editor appears rather to have merited the appellation of a pompous blunderer than an accurate biblical critic. The margin, however, of Stephens' folio edition, in some degree, atoned for the imperfections of the text, by a valuable and numerous collection of various readings, derived from fifteen Greek MSS. and the text of the Complutensian Polyglott.

BEZA'S EDITIONS.

Beza like Stephens was a native of France, who fled to Switzerland on account of his religion. The materials of his edition were mostly the same as those employed by Stephens. His famous MS. now the Cambridge, the Clermont MS. of the Epistles, and the Syriac Testament, published by Tremellius, with a close Latin translation, were valuable sources of emendation, which, however, seem to have been lost in the hands of Beza: for though a good classical scholar, he was unskilled in oriental literature; and worst of all, blinded by theological prejudice, so as to use his helps only for prolemical purposes; preferring the analogy of faith to the authority of MSS. In short, says Marsh, he emended the text of Stephens' third edition in not more than fifty places; and even these emendations were not always founded on proper authority." He has been charged by Wetstein of unfairness and dissimilation, in suppressing the greater number and most important readings of his own MSS. and strenuously maintaining that all Stephens' MSS. agreed in those places, where, through negligence, Stephens had not taken the trouble to mark them. The judgment of Beza has often been found to rest on mere conjecture, or the testimony of one MS. in opposition to the concurrent voice all antiquity.

Dr. Campbell, who, being a theologian of the same sect with Beza, cannot be suspected of prejudice towards his works, yet candidly observes, "that Beza was too violent a party man to possess that impartiality without which it was impossible to succeed as an interpreter of holy writ. It requires but very little of a critical eye to discern in him a constant effort to accommodate the style of the sacred writers to that of his sect." Hence this Latin

translation which accompanied his edition of the Greek, manifested on many occasions, a paraphrastic circumlocution, a spraining of the original, and a libertinism in interpolating, that was shameful in a man of his learning and profession.

To instance in one or two examples, where Beza met the words of the Apostle, which directly teach the doctrine of Universal salvation, he gave them such a turn as not only to pervert the meaning, but also obviate the doctrine: saying, "*Qui quosvis homines vult servari*,"* which he meant to imply, that God willed to save whom he pleased of all men: and again, "*Qui est conservator omnium hominum*,"† who is the preserver of all men, but the word *Soter* is rendered *Salvator*, *Savior*, in every other place in the Testament of Beza: and again, *Gratia illa Dei salutifera Quibusvis*—implying that the Grace of God brought salvation to whomsoever he pleases.‡ But the Geneva English reads the passage correctly, "for the Grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared."

ELZEVIR'S EDITION.

In this edition of 1624, the unknown editor appears to have made no use of any MSS. or critical authority. The whole of his materials were drawn from Beza's edition, and the third edition of Stephens. So closely did he follow the edition of Beza, that only fifty variations could be found in the whole of the New Testament; and in these, he borrowed partly from Stephens, and partly from other editions; but certainly, says Marsh, from no Greek manuscripts.

The *Textus Receptus*, therefore, was copied, with a few exceptions, from Beza; Beza closely followed Stephens' third edition; Stephens in that edition, copied solely from the fifth of Erasmus, except in the Revelation. The Received text, therefore, in common use, resolves itself into the Complutensian and Erasmian editions. But neither Erasmus nor the Complutensian editors, used any manuscript of greater antiquity than the tenth century, and their other resources seem to be only a few of the latest Greek Fathers, and the Latin Vulgate. Behold the *Received Text* canonized by vulgar prejudice, yet having little claims to approbation, except for the neatness of its typographical execution!!

THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

Horne says Beza's fifth edition in 1598, being esteemed the most accurate, was adopted as the basis of the English Version of the New Testament, published by King James' authority in 1611. It is of no importance whether the edition of Beza or that of Erasmus were used, the readings being almost invariably the same, but it will appear by a brief notice of the previous English editions, that even the imperfect Greek text had not the most power-

*1 Tim. ii. 4. † 1 Tim. iv. 10. ‡ Titus ii. 11.

ful influence, in the direction of the English Scriptures. In 1522 appeared Luther's German translation of the New Testament, and in 1534 a revised edition of the whole Bible: consequently he could not have use any printed edition of the original New Testament, but either the first or second of Erasmus. His abilities as a Hebrew and Greek scholar have not been doubted, but without the Vulgate, he did not possess the means of translating the Hebrew; and the assistance derived from the Vulgate, is so visible in Luther's translation that passages have been discovered which agree with the Latin, even where it differs from the Hebrew. Indeed there was no Hebrew Lexicon at that time, in existence, except those of Reuchlin and Munster, extracted from the meager glossaries of the Rabbins.

William Tindal to whom we owe the first printed translation into English, having formed the design of translating the New Testament into English, removed to Antwerp, where in 1526 it was printed. Le Long, the justly celebrated editor of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* calls this "the New Testament, translated into English from the German version of Luther." It appears that Tindal understood Latin and German, but of his acquaintance with the Greek and Hebrew, little can be said. Bishop Marsh says "Tindal, spent some time with Luther, used the same books and proceeded in the same order as Luther, and we may conclude his translation was taken at least in part from Luther's; for this conclusion is confirmed by the Germanisms, which it contains, some of which are still preserved in our Authorised Version."

A Translation thus made by Tindal assisted in some parts of the Old Testament by Rogers, was published at Hamburgh under the feigned name of Matthewe, and hence called Matthewe's Bible. Subsequent English editions were Coverdale's Bible, Cranmer's Bible, (called also the Great Bible, and sometimes by the names of the printers, Grafton and Whitchurch,) the Geneva Bible, and Parker's or the Bishops' Bible, which last was published in 1568, and from that time was used in our Churches till the introduction of our *present* version. Now the Bishops' Bible, as appears from Archbishop Parker's instructions, was only a revision of Cranmer's Bible: and Cranmer's Bible was only a correction (in some places for the worse) of Matthewe's Bible, that is, of the translation made by Tyndal and Rogers. We see therefore the genealogy of the *Bishops'* Bible; and the Bishops' Bible was made the *basis* of our present authorised version. For the first rule, given by James the First to the compilers of it, was this, "The ordinary Bible, read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed, and as little altered, as the original would permit." But whenever Matthewe's Bible, or Coverdale's, or Whitchurch's, or the Geneva Bible came *nearer* to the original, (that is to the editions of the Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament *then* in use,) the text of these *other* English Bibles was ordered to be adopted.

King James having succeeded to the throne of England in 1603, and some objections having been made to the Bishops' Bible at the conference held at Hampton Court in the following year. The King commanded a new version to be made; and fifty-four learned men were appointed to this important work; but before they commenced, seven of them had either died or declined the task; for the list given by Fuller contains only forty-seven names. These were divided into six companies,* arranged in the following order: ten were to meet at Westminster, and to translate from the Pentateuch to the end of the second book of Kings. Eight, assembled at Cambridge, were to finish the rest of the Historical Books, and the Hagiographa. At Oxford, seven were to undertake the four greater prophets, with the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the twelve minor prophets. The four Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse, were assigned to another company of eight, also at Oxford: and the epistles of St. Paul, together with the remaining canonical epistles, were allotted to another company of seven, at Westminster. Lastly, another company at Cambridge, were to translate the apocryphal books, including the prayer of Manasseh.

The translation was commenced in the spring of 1607, and the completion of it occupied almost three years. At the expiration of that time, three copies of the whole Bible, thus translated and revised, were sent to London,—one from Oxford, one from Cambridge, and a third from Westminster. Here a committee of six,

*To these six companies of venerable translators, the King gave the following instructions:

"1. The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the original will permit.

"2. The names of the prophets and the holy writers, with the other names in the text, to be retained as near as may be, accordingly as they are vulgularly used.

"3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word church not to be translated congregation.

"4. When any word hath divers significations, that to be kept, which hath been most commonly used by the most eminent Fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of faith.

"5. The division of the chapters to be altered either not at all, or as little as may be, if necessity so require.

"6. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words which cannot without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.

"7. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down, as shall serve for the fit references of one scripture to another.

"8. Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters; and having translated or amended them severally by himself, where he thinks good, all to meet together, to confer what they have done, and agree for their part what shall stand.

"9. As any one company hath dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of, seriously and judiciously: for his majesty is very careful in this point.

two being deputed by the companies at Oxford, two by those at Cambridge, and two by those at Westminster, reviewed and polished the whole work: which was finally revised by Dr. Smith (afterwards bishop of Gloucester,) who wrote the preface, and by Dr. Bilson, bishop of Winchester. This translation of the Bible was first published in folio in 1611.

Now, though we are fully satisfied, that, considering their circumstances, prejudices, and means, the translators succeeded as well as could possibly be expected: and though we are as fully satisfied that no doctrine of the Bible has been either subverted, or so far obscured as not to be perceptible in James' translation, yet to all who are qualified to judge correctly and impartially, the following reasons for refusing entire submission to the English Bible called the authorised version, will be abundantly satisfactory.

1. The translation, if it had been taken from the original, must have been made from the Received text of the Greek, and such Hebrew copies as were very imperfect; for before the age of the Buxtorfs, there neither was a correct Hebrew text nor the means of translating it accurately.

2. The Hebrew and Greek languages were not sufficiently understood by Theologians in the reign of King James. Scarcely was there a Grammar or Lexicon in existence, from which any thing above a mere smattering of the languages could be obtained, and oriental literature had only arisen on the Christian world after the long and dark night of the middle ages.

3. As all living languages, especially of free and commercial nations, are liable to fluctuate, so the English language has greatly changed during the last two centuries; and hence the English Bible contains many obsolete, unintelligible, and unseemly phrases, which ought to be supplanted by language more suitable to

"10. If any company upon the review of the book so sent, shall doubt or differ upon any places, to send them word thereof, to note the places, and therewithal to send their reasons; to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting, which is to be of the chief persons of each company, at the end of the work.

"11. When any place of special obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed by authority, to send to any learned in the land for his judgment on such a place.

"12. Letters to be sent from every bishop to the rest of his clergy, admonishing them of this translation in hand, and to move and charge as many as, being skilful in the tongues, have taken pains in that kind, to send their particular observations to the company, either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford, according as it was directed before in the king's letter to the Archbishop.

"13. The directors in each company to be the Deans of Westminster and Chester for Westminster, and the King's Professors in Hebrew and Greek in the two Universities.

"14. These translations to be used, when they agree better with the text than the Bishop's Bible, viz. Tyndal's, Coverdale's, Matthewe's Whitchurch's, Geneva.

express the sense, and maintain the dignity of the holy scriptures.

4. The Phraseology of the sacred writers, and the historical circumstances were not sufficiently known or regarded by the translators. In attestation of this assumption let the writings of Carpzov, Jahn, Lightfoot, Schoetgen, Harmer, Paxton, and many others bear witness.

5. The vast collections of *various readings*; exhibited by Kennicott, De Rossi, and Griesbach show the original scriptures to have been corrupted in many thousand places: and the influence of a peculiar creed, and political control, induced the translators to violate the sense of scripture in numerous instances.

CRITICAL EDITIONS.

The main object in view, in noticing the Critical editions, is to point out the advantages which arise from a corrected English translation, formed on the same principles; rejecting the spurious and even all the doubtful readings from the text; receiving all the certainly genuine into the text; and placing the probable and doubtful in the margin, with appropriate characteristic marks: for instance, placing all the probable in Roman letter, and all the doubtful in Italic.

Of the Critical editions there are two kinds: first, such as retain the *received text*, and supply various readings in the margin; secondly, those whose text has been corrected on the authority of the MSS. and Versions. Of the first class are the editions of Stephens, Walton, Curcelles, Fell, Mill, Kuster, Bengel, and Wetstein: of the second class are those of Colinænus, Wells, Bowyer, Harwood, Mathaei, Alter, and Griesbach.

To the assiduous researches and valuable discoveries of the learned for the last two centuries, we are indebted for an invaluable apparatus, and the rules for applying it for the restoration of the sacred text to its primitive purity. Hence is derived all that mighty mass of literature, commencing with the London Polyglott, and continued to the completion of Griesbach's incomparable Greek Testament, in which the stores of literature and ingenious criticism, seem to have been exhausted.

LONDON POLYGLOTT.

The first editor who deserves particular notice is Brian Walton, to whose exertions, aided by several distinguished literary friends, we are indebted for the famous London Polyglott, published 1653—1657, in six volumes folio; to which was added Professor Castle's *Heptaglott Lexicon*, in two folio volumes: the whole constituting an everlasting monument of English enterprise and literary fame.

Walton says in his preface, that he had examined the most celebrated editions, both ancient and modern; had carefully inspected the ancient versions; made diligent search through the public

libraries for the best MSS. studiously collated them, and compared the results with the labors of those who had gone before, whereby he was enabled to supply the defects of preceeding editions; and acquire a valuable accession to the former stock of critical materials.

This vast work exhibits the Law and the Gospel in a style so magnificent and decorated, as to delight the heart of the Jew and exalt the faith of the Christian. The *first* volume contains the very learned and useful Prolegomena, and the Pentateuch, every sheet of which exhibits, at one view, 1. The Hebrew text with the Latin version of Montanus interlined; 2. the same verses in the Clementine Vulgate; 3. the vatican Septuagint, with the Latin translation of Flaminus Nobilis, and the various readings of the Alexandrine MS. at the bottom of the column; 4. the Syriac version with a collateral translation in Latin; 5. the Paraphrase of Onkelos with a Latin version; 6. the Hebreo-Samaritan, and Samaritan version with one Latin translation and explanatory notes; 7. the Arabic with a collateral Latin translation which generally agrees with the Septuagint. The *second* volume contains the Historical books, and the *third* volume comprehends all the poetic and Prophetic books from Job to Malachi: *both* volumes in the same languages as the *first*, except the Samaritan, and the addition of an Ethiopic version of the Psalms, so nearly related to the Septuagint, that the same Latin translation serves for both versions. The *fourth* volume contains the Apocryphal books in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Arabic: and three Targums of the Pentateuch. The *fifth* volume contains the New Testament: the four Gospels in *six* languages and the other books in five. The *sixth* volume is filled with *various readings*, *critical remarks*, and explanations of proper names. The principal assistant editors were Castle, Hyde, Pocock, Lightfoot, Clarke and De Dieu; all of whom have immortalized their names by their other individual labors.

"We are at present concerned only with the text of the Greek Testament, and with the critical apparatus, which accompanied that text. Now the text itself, (which is contained in the fifth volume) is a re-impression of the folio edition by Robert Stephens, which Walton adopted in preference to the Elzevir text, because he embodied in his own work the various readings in Stephen's margin, which being adapted to Stephen's text might often be no various readings to any other. The importance therefore of the London Polyglott, as far as it relates to our present history, is confined to the *materials*, which it afforded for the purpose of future emendation.

The materials derived from *Greek* authorities comprise a collection of extracts from sixteen Greek manuscripts, in addition to the readings which had been quoted by Stephens. For the collation of these manuscripts, as also on many other accounts, Walton was greatly indebted to Archbishop Usher. They are descri-

bed at the head of the collation in the sixth volume by Walton himself: and a further account of them is given in the Prolegomena to Mill's Greek Testament.

But the extracts from Greek Manuscripts were neither the sole nor the chief materials, which the Polyglott afforded for the emendation of the Greek text. We have already seen, that the *ancient versions* of the New Testament are another source of various readings: and this source was opened more amply and more usefully in the London Polyglott, than in any of those which had preceded. In addition to the Latin Vulgate, it contains the Syriac, the Arabic, and the Ethiopic versions of the New Testament, with the Persian in the Gospels. And those oriental versions are not only arranged in the most convenient manner, for the purpose of comparing them with the Greek, but they are accompanied with literal Latin translations, and even they, who are unacquainted with the oriental languages, might still have recourse to them for various readings.

MILL'S EDITION.

The great collection of various readings amassed in the sixth volume of the London Polyglott, soon excited attention, and produced two valuable editions of the Greek Testament, with collections of *readings*: the first was published at Amsterdam by Curcelles, containing a considerable variety of various readings from MSS. and printed editions; and is one of the most beautiful as well as the most correctly printed, among the small Elzevir editions; the second was published by Bishop Fell in one volume octavo, 1675, enriched by the various readings from the London Polyglott, the edition of Curcelles, twelve Bodleian, four Dublin, two Paris, and twenty-two Roman Greek MSS. collated by order of Pope Urban VIII. to which were added a collection of various readings from the Coptic and Gothic versions.

Dr. Fell, notwithstanding the superiority of his edition, became so sensible that much remained to be done in order to obtain a genuine text, that he determined to promote a new edition; and for this purpose selected Dr. John Mill of Edmund Hall Oxford. Here, says Michaelis, ends the infancy of criticism, and begins the age of manhood in respect to the New Testament. After the incessant labor of *thirty years*, in examining the treasures of the ancient Fathers, Versions, and MSS. of every age, in order to ascertain what had been the state of the original text from the formation of the Canon to the present time, and enable the reader to discover, by the help of his 30,000 *various readings*, what had been contained in the genuine MSS. he published his noble edition at Oxford, 1707, in one volume folio; and survived the accomplishment of his Herculian labor, only *fourteen days*!

WETSTEIN'S EDITION.

About three years after the publication of Mill's edition, it was

reprinted at Amsterdam under the superintendence of Ludolph Kuster; and the critical apparatus increased by readings from twelve Greek MSS. and in ten years after Mill, Dr. Wells published a Greek and English Testament, corrected from Mill's various readings. But a still more respectable attempt than either of these two, was made by Bengel, Professor in Tubingen, Suabia, who in the year 1734, published a quarto edition of the Greek Testament, to which he prefixed an "Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament," and added a "Critical Apparatus." Though this apparatus was chiefly taken from Dr. Mill's edition, he added important extracts from more than twenty Greek MSS. and from some of the ancient versions, particularly the Armenian. But all these editions only served to prepare the way for the stupenduous labors of John, James, Wetstein, Professor in the College of Remonstrants. In his twentieth year, while a student at Basle, his native place, he published a treatise "Concerning the various readings of the New Testament;" and when he had finished his studies, he sallied forth through the different nations of Europe, in search of Greek MSS. which he every where collated with the greatest assiduity: and in 1730, published, at Amsterdam, his PROLEGOMENA; and after a delay of twenty years, he published the immense work itself, in two folio volumes, containing above a *million* of literary and classical quotations!

This edition is divided into four parts, the first containing the Gospels, the second containing the Epistles of St. Paul, the third containing the Acts of the Apostles with the Catholic Epistles, and the fourth containing the Apocalypse. *Each* of these four parts is accompanied with Prolegomena, in which the Greek manuscripts are described, that are *quoted* in each part: and Wetstein's motive to this four-fold division was, that it corresponds with the usual contents of the Greek manuscripts, which seldom comprise the whole New Testament, but contain, some of them the four Gospels only, others only St. Paul's Epistles, others again the Acts of the Apostles with the Catholic Epistles, and lastly, others the Apocalypse alone, though two or more of these portions are sometimes found united in the same manuscript, while on the other hand there are manuscripts, in which the portions are still smaller. The Prolegomena to the first part, in addition to the description of Greek manuscripts, contain an account of the ecclesiastical writers, and of the ancient versions, which are quoted in this edition. These Prolegomena, with the *Animadversions and Cautions* at the end of the second volume, must be studied by every man, who would fully appreciate a work, of which it impossible to give an adequate notion.

The *text* of this edition is precisely the same with the *Elzevir* text, and hence it is called on the title-page *Novum Testamentum Græcum editionis receptæ*. Though Wetstein very considerably augmented the stock of critical materials, though he drew from

various sources, which had hitherto remained unopened, though he collated, not by other hands, but by his own, and though few men have possessed a greater share either of learning or sagacity, yet no alteration was made in the Greek text. The charge which has been laid to Wetstein, of proposing alterations in the text for the mere purpose of obtaining support to a particular creed, is without foundation. The merits therefore of Wetstein, as a *critic*, ought not to be impeached by ascribing to him undue influence in the choice of his readings. His merits, as a critic, undoubtedly surpass the merits of his predecessors: he *alone* contributed more to advance the criticism of the Greek Testament, than all who had gone before him: and this task he performed, not only without support, either public or private, but during a series of severe trials, under which a mind of less energy than Wetstein's would infallibly have sunk. In short he gave a new turn to the criticism of the Greek Testament, and laid the foundation, on which later editors have built.*

GRIESBACH'S EDITION.

We now proceed to the labors of Griesbach; Professor of Divinity at Jena, Saxony, the materials he used, and the rules he applied, for the formation of an *amended text*. Manuscript criticism had been the study of his life, he travelled like Wetstein, particularly to examine himself the most ancient MSS. wherever deposited in the public libraries abroad. Regarding the mass of various readings as principally useful for ascertaining the character of the manuscripts in which they were found, he made it his principle object to revise rather than augment the critical apparatus furnished by the works of Mill, Bengel, and Wetstein. In re-collating

*The emendations, which Wetstein had proposed, were adopted by Mr Bowyer, a learned printer in London, who inserted them in the text of his edition published eleven years afterwards.

In comparing the labors of Mill and Wetstein, a mighty preeminence, in point of accuracy, must be adjudged to the latter. Michaelis, who pointed out about 500 mistakes of Mill, in the acts of the Apostles alone, has completely failed to prove the charge of 18, against the whole edition of Wetstein; for out of these eighteen, Marsh asserts, thirteen are false charges, and the fourteenth is doubtful. But Mill fell into many inaccuracies by strong attachment to the Fathers, the Latin Vulgate, and dependence on the Latin translations of the Oriental Versions. The errors of Mill & Bengel have been corrected by the learned and able work of Professor Bode, entitled, "Pseudo-critica Millio-Bengeliana." Helmstad, 1767. But we must plead an apology for Mill; he had the first great mind that dared to launch into the unbounded ocean of sacred literature, and though he could not attend to every particular, with due minuteness, yet let him have the praise of having done that in which thousands would have failed: and his Prolegomena is the first attempt at regular system in criticism.

Wetstein on the other hand had his faults, which arose from his hostility to the Vulgate, and led him to depreciate every manuscript in which he perceived a co-incidence; and to condemn its readings as corrupt: and from a sus-

the original documents from which they had drawn their materials, he has given the world an honorable testimony in favor of their accuracy and fidelity. "I can speak, says he, with the greatest confidence, for having examined many MSS. anew which were formerly collated by Mill and Wetstein, I have discovered many omissions, but few erroneous quotations." As it was Griesbach's intention to publish a Greek Testament, the text of which, though formed on the Basis of that of the Elzevir edition, should be corrected as required by the best and most ancient MS. authority; he deemed it necessary to make only a *selection* of the most important and characteristic of the various readings.

"In 1774 he published a Synopsis, or Harmony of the three first Gospels, with an amended text, and a selection of various readings; to which were added, likewise with an amended text and a selection of readings, the Gospel of St John. and the Acts of the Apostles.* In the year following he published in the same manner, the Epistles and the Apocalypse. And, as the Synopsis, though in itself a very useful work, and deservedly re-published, formed a contrast with the other books of the New Testament, he printed in 1777 the three first Gospels entire. Such were the component parts of what is called Griesbach's first edition of the Greek Testament, of which it was necessary to give a short account, though our examination of Griesbach's merits as a critical editor, must be reserved for the description of his second and more important edition.

In the mean time the stock of critical materials was very considerably augmented by the editions of Matthæi, Alter, and Birch, of which it is the more necessary to give some account, as the materials, which they provided, were all transferred into Griesbach's second edition.

The edition of the Greek Testament, published by Mathæi, who was Professor, first at Moscow, and afterwards at Wittenburg, was printed at Riga, in twelve octavo volumes, at different times between 1782 and 1788: and pronounced the best by Middleton. But whatever opinion be formed of the *relative* value attached to the different classes of Greek manuscripts, whether the opinion of Michaelis and Griesbach on the *one* hand, or of Matthæi on the *other* hand to be the true one, the *fact*, that Matthæi undertook a revision of the Greek text on the authority of *one* set of manu-

picion of a tendency to Latinize, he omitted altogether the various readings of the twenty-two MSS. collated by Caryophilus at Rome, of which Mill had made ample use.

*This edition was published as a manual or text-book for a course of Lectures, which Professor Griesbach was that time delivering at Jena, and in which he explained the first three Evangelists Synoptically, that is, by uniting together the three narratives of the same event. His second most noble edition was not published until 1796, and 1806; the first volume at an interval of twenty, and the second after an interval of thirty years assiduous labors!

scripts, must remain undisputed. And since no impartial judge can admit, that the genuine text of the Greek Testament may be established, as well by applying only a *part* of our materials, as by a judicious employment of the whole, the edition of Matthæi is only so far of importance, as it furnishes new materials for future uses; materials indeed, which are accompanied with much useful information, and many learned remarks.

About the same period, namely in 1786 and 1787, Professor Alter at Vienna published an addition of the Greek Testament in two thick octavos. The text of this edition is neither the common text, nor a revision of it, but a mere copy from a single manuscript, and that not a very ancient one, in the Imperial Library at Vienna. The various readings, which are not arranged as in other editions, but are printed in separate parcels as first made by the collator, are likewise derived from Greek manuscripts in the Imperial Library. And the whole collation was augmented by extracts from the Coptic, the Slavonian, and the Latin versions, which are also printed in the same indigestd manner, as the *Greek* readings. Alter's edition therefore contains *mere* materials for future uses.

While Matthæi was employed at Moscow and Alter at Vienna, Professors Birch and Alder were engaged by the late King of Denmark to travel into Italy, and Professors Moldenhawer and Tychsen to travel into Spain, in search of *further* materials for the criticism of the Greek Testament. For this purpose they examined the principal libraries in Venice, Florence, Bologna, and Rome, with the library of the Escurial in Spain. The produce of their researches, as far as relates to the four Gospels, was published by Professor Birch at Copenhagen in 1788, in a quarto volume, designed for the first volume of an edition of the Greek Testament; and in the Prolegomena to this volume was given a detailed account of the collated manuscripts. In the *text* of this edition no alterations were made. But a very complete collation is given of that distinguished manuscript, which is known by the name of the Vatican, and which till that time, in the New Testament, had been only partially examined. Another very important addition consisted in the extracts from a Syriac version, written in a peculiar dialect, which Alder, who collated it at Rome, calls the dialect of Jerusalem.

In addition to the *new* sources, which were opened in the interval between Griesbach's first and second edition, must be noticed some publications, which contributed to augment or improve the knowledge *already* acquired. Thus the Philoxenian version, which Wetstein had imperfectly collated in manuscript, being printed by Dr. White at Oxford in 1778 (namely the four Gospels, for the other books were deferred more than twenty years,) enabled Griesbach to correct various mistakes in the former collation, and make to it considerable additions. Similar advantages were derived

from the publication of some ancient Greek manuscripts, of the Codex Alexandrinus by Woide in London in 1786, of the Codex Boernerianus by Matthæi at Meissen in 1791, and of the Codex Bezæ by Dr. Kipling at Cambridge in 1793.

But after all the *materials* collected for the purpose of obtaining a correct edition of the Greek Testament, materials for which all the known libraries in Europe had been searched, and which it had employed nearly three centuries to obtain, there was still wanting an *editor* of sufficient learning, acuteness, industry, and impartiality in the weighing of evidence, to apply those materials to their proper object. Dr. Griesbach, by his *first* edition of the Greek Testament, had already afforded convincing proofs of his critical ability: and hence the learned in general, especially in his *own* country, regarded him as the person, who was best qualified to undertake this new revision of the Greek text. For this purpose he re-examined the most ancient manuscripts, wherever doubts might be entertained, and it was important to ascertain the turth. The peculiar readings, which distinguish one class of manuscripts from another, and are the basis on which that classification is formed, were likewise objects of particular attention. But he, in general, disregarded the mass of readings, which are common to most manuscripts, as serving rather to incumber, than to improve our critical apparatus. At the same time, whenever uncollated manuscripts presented themselves to his notice, he neglected not to extract what was worthy of attention. The fruits of his researches, with his remarks on the examined manuscripts, he published in two octavo volumes printed at Halle in 1785 and 1793 under the title of *Symbolæ Criticæ*. This work contains the principles, on which Griesbach has founded his critical system; and consequently should be studied by every man, who attempts to form an estimate of his critical merits.

As the quotations from the Greek Testament, which are scattered in the writings of the most ancient Greek Fathers, are of great importance in ascertaining the the genuineness of disputed passages, he undertook a new and complete collation of the works of Origen, which he also published in his Symbolæ criticæ, accompanied with the quotations of Clement of Alexandria, which differed from the common text.

Further, as the testimony of the most ancient Latin versions, such as those, which have been published by Blanchini and Sabatier, are, in many cases, important to the Greek text, he undertook a new collation of those ancient versions. Of the Sahidic version, or the version in the dialect of the Upper Egypt, he quoted the readings, which had been furnished by Woide, Georgi, and Munter. Of the Armenian version a new collation was made for him by Bredenkamp of Bremen: and the Slavonian version was collated for him, both in manuscript and in print, by Dobrowsky at Prague. Nor must we neglect to mention the fragments of

two very ancient Greek manuscripts, preserved at Wolfenbuttel, which Knittel had published with his Fragment of the Gothic version.

There is a question however in reserve, of still greater consequence than the extant or the value even of the *critical* materials: and that is, Have those materials been *properly applied* to the emendation of the Greek text? That they were *conscientiously* applied, is admitted by every man, to whom Griesbach's character is known. His scrupulous integrity, as a man and a scholar, is sufficient guarantee for the honest application of them. Nor have his contemporaries ever questioned either his learning, or his judgment, if we except Matthæi, who wrote under the influence of personal animosity. Of the emendations which he has introduced, there are many, which had received the approbation even of the *early* editors, Erasmus and Beza; others had been approved by Mill; others again by Bengelius; and most of them by Wetstein and Bowyer."

CHRONOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Chronology, as distinguished from history, is employed in ascertaining dates and the order of events; end therefore leads to the detection of errors, which may have crept into particular texts of scripture. Though only a small portion of Chronology falls within the compass of the Evangelical History, yet the *two principal events* of the New Testament seem not to be established with precision: these are the time of *Christ's Birth* and *Death*.

More than a few words are unnecessary to settle a theological dispute, of long and accrimonious duration. Luke affirms John commenced his ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, Pontius Pilate being Governor of Judea. This is clear. Not sooner than the second year of John's ministry, did the Master of Christians receive Baptism, and at that time he was thirty years of age according to the same Evangelist. Now the *sixteenth* year of the sole empire of Tiberius was the year of Rome 783; consequently our Lord was born in the year of Rome 753, the beginning of the 195 Olympiade, the year of the Julian Period 4711, Usherian year of the world 4004, and fourth year of the reign of Archelaus, *Herod being dead three years and nine months.* This view will be confirmed by the time of Pilate's government, which, says Josephus, lasted ten years and ended before the death of Tiberius in the year of Rome 790; and consequently must not have commenced sooner than A. U. 780 or A. D. 27. Therefore our Lord must have been born in the year of Rome 753 and first year of the Vulgar Christian Æra; and those Chronologers who antidate the time of Christ's Birth, to place it in the reign of Herod, fail to place the appearance of the Baptist within the government of Pilate; and avoiding Scylla, they have fallen into Charybdis.

The duration of Christ's Ministry is generally extended to three

or four years: hence Commentators and Harmonists point out no less than four or five passovers in the Evangelical History, but John mentions *only two;* the rest have originated in the exuberance of theological fancy. Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Priestley, Dr. McKnight, Mr. Mann, and others have adduced abundant evidence that the early Fathers and Commentators included all the ministry of Jesus within *one year*, which they called the "*Accepted year of the Lord.*" Tatian, who composed the first Harmony of the Gospels, about the year 170, comprephends all the transactions from the Baptism to the Passion of Christ, in one year. Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Julius Africanus, Lactantius, Jerome, Augustine, and Prosper, limit the duration of Christ's Ministry, to two passovers, or one year, which was the 16th of Tiberius and consulship of the Gemini. Now if Tradition ever ought to be trusted, surely when no fact can be opposed.—Eusebius was the first who imagined he discovered more than two passovers in John, but the same Eusebius says, "It is evident, that all the acts of our Saviour, related by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are those which followed the imprisonment of John, and are comprised within the space of one year." If with Tatian, Comestor, Ludolphus, Mann, and Priesley, we transpose the *fifth* and *sixth* chapters of John, we shall find that the Evangelist mentions only *one winter*, *one summer*, *two passovers*, *one Pentecost*, one feast of dedication, and one of Tabernacles; and all these in their natural order: and that these chapters should be transposed, the connexion and circumstances of the history absolutely require; for the last of the fourth chapter leaves Jesus in Gallilee, and the first of the sixth represents him passing out of it; and the end of the fifth has an easy and natural conexion with the beginning of the seventh chapter.

See Isaac Newton's Observations on Daniel; Priestley's, Harmony; Mc Knights's Harmony, fourth Preliminary observation; Mann on the Duration of Christ's Ministry; Euseb—Eccles—Hist. L. 13. C. 24.

Utica, August 19th, 1826.

END OF THE INTRODUCTION.

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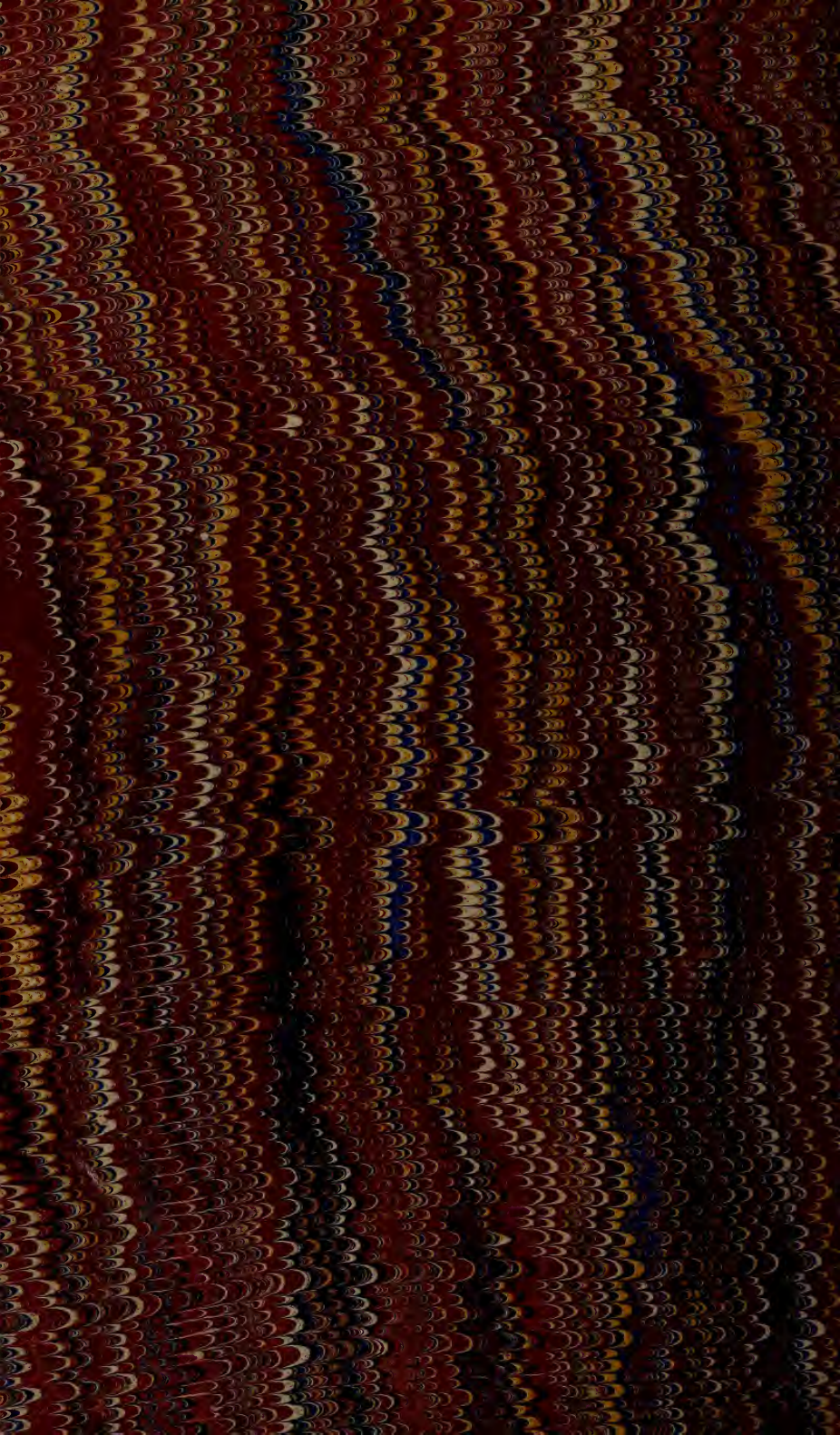

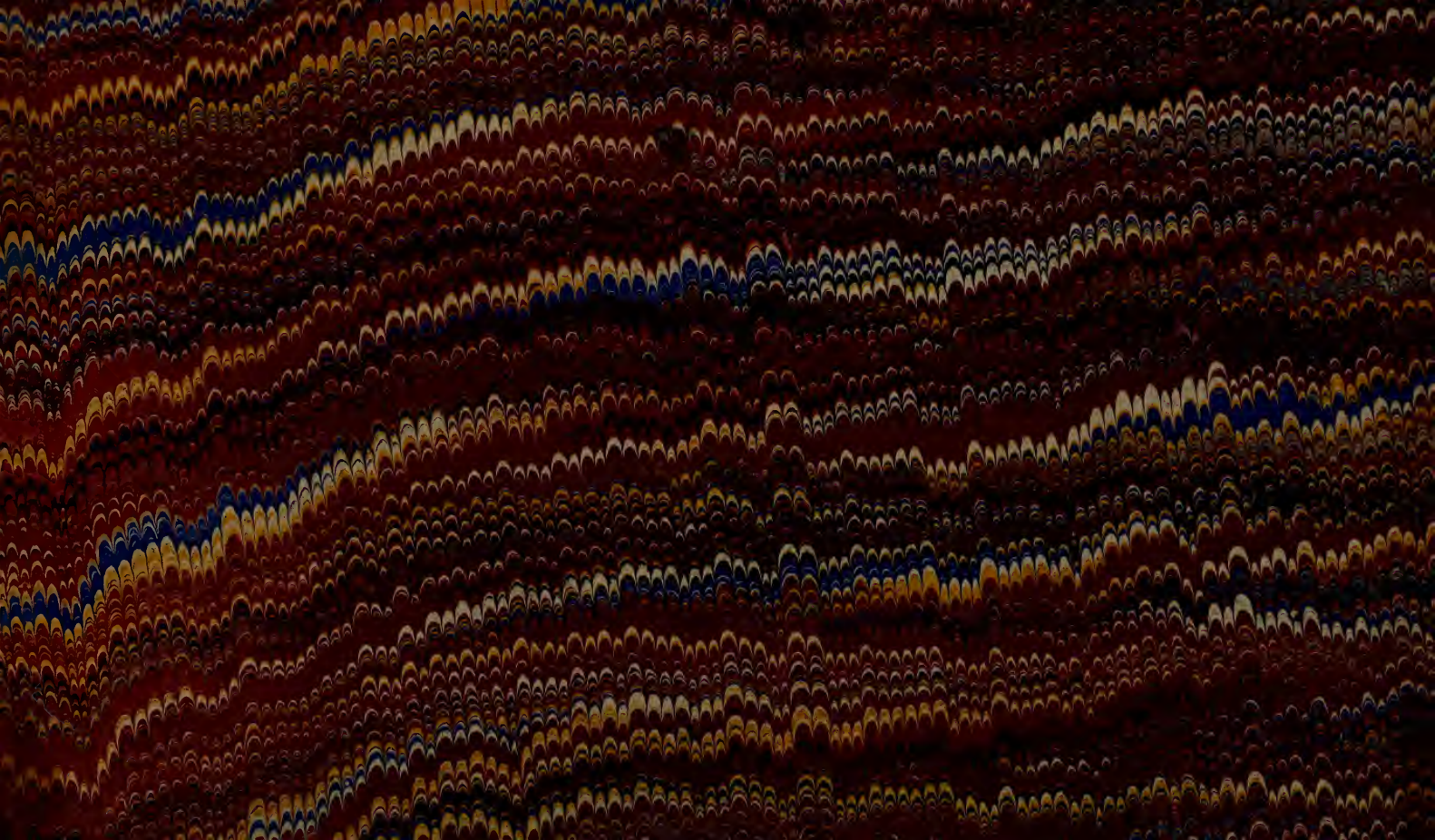

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